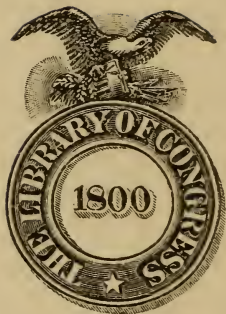


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# PRACTICAL THOUGHTS

FOR

## THE OLD AND THE YOUNG

BY

REV. F. M. HAMILTON,

AUTHOR OF

- "A Conversation on the C. M. E. Church,"
- "A Plain Account of the C. M. E. Church,"
- "A Hand Book on Church Government."

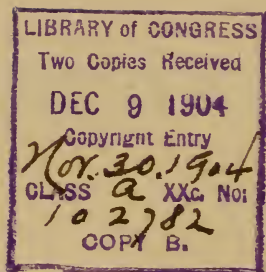
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"Think on these things."—*St Paul.*

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PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE C. M. E. CHURCH,  
H. BULLOCK, AGENT.  
1904

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## DEDICATORY.

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*To the coming host of Epworth Leaguers  
of the C. M. E Church, this  
volume is dedicated  
by the Author*

(3)

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## INTRODUCTION.

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It would be very difficult for me to answer the general question being asked by the world whether or not books grow in usefulness and power as they multiply. This one thing we doubt not, that books influence our lives. They educate us for good or bad.

Some books teach us how to live, while others teach us how to die. Some give joy and solace to the bereaved, the down cast, and sorrowing ones; while others bleed hearts where hearts need no bleeding. Just think of the gold mines of thought that are hid behind the lids of thousands and thousands of books that drop from the press each year, and yet thousands and millions of people walk over and around, and through these gold mines of thought without ever being stirred to look for a single grain of wisdom. But over and above them all, the books that we find full of the essences of true freshness are the sweetest and best books to and for us after all.

Some may think that after so many books have been written that there can be no *tour de farce* of freshness hung on to any subject; but not so when you stop and think for a

few minutes. So the truth seekers will say, "Let me read all books that will help me to be wiser, nobler, and better."

"Practical Thoughts" is a book just finished by Rev. Dr. F. M. Hamilton, one of the ministers of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America. The author in his own amiable, clear, terse, and forceful way discusses several important subjects in this work.

I will say to the Christian people and the world generally—read all the book, re-read it, but if in the multiplicity of duties and the press of business you should be forced to omit any part of it, do not fail to read the author's explanation upon the following subjects, viz., "The Ministers of the Gospel," "Carrying the Crowds," "Young Christians," "Second Class Conversions," "Church Obligations," "Keep to the Right," and "Our Racial Needs."

Dr. F. M. Hamilton was born near Washington, Ark., Sept. 3, 1858. In early life he connected himself with the C. M. E Church in America. He has, on account of his poignant insight to business and acuteness of intellectual power, risen like magic from the earth. He has cut and cleared his way through stubborn opposition to some of the most prominent positions in the gift of the Church. He joined the Conference at Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 27, 1878. After pastoring in Arkansas and Alabama, he was transferred to the Virginia Conference where he presided over the Wash-



ington District for five years. At the General Conference held in Augusta, Ga., May 1886, he was elected Book Agent and Editor of the Christian Index. He held these positions for four years. At the General Conference held in Little Rock, Ark., May 1890, he was re-elected Editor of the Christian Index; but resigned Jan. 16, 1892. Rev. Dr. Hamilton has pastored and presided over some of the most important charges in the connection.

Dr. Hamilton is a man of resources. He has plenty of knowledge, and if knowledge should fail him he has a full supply of invention. Moreover, if invention should fail him, he has a poetical chord on which he plays admirably. His stock of knowledge grows apace. His appetite for information is insatiable, and his ardent soul pants for deeper and deeper draughts at the fountain of knowledge. He is well known in the Church as our first historian—I mean by this, that he was the first to collect the history of the Church into book form—hence his “Plain Account of the C. M. E. Church.” He is also author of the “Hand Book on Church Government,” a book that is widely read on the account of the information it gives on Church Polity etc. And now he gives to the Church and Race his third book, “Practical Thoughts.”

In reading this book, the thought that will cling to you most will be the absence of the Ego in the author’s Cosmos and his liberal

views. Yet he is to the point on everything that comes within the scope of his subjects.

The author does not take any neutral grounds, nor does he ring any bells of compromise when it comes to pointing out the right course we should take in life. He is lofty in his advocacy of the right, strong in breadth of profound thought, and beautiful in unity and simplicity. He is a close reasoner. Readers, read "Practical Thoughts," for in it you will find the pith and marrow of gospel truth.

May the blessings of God Almighty and of his Son Jesus Christ rest upon the author and his book. And may the truths herein contained cause all who may read them that are not in the good old way, to turn their feet to the testimony of the Lord, make haste and delay not to keep his commandments.

May these practical thoughts be a source of great joy and comfort as well as thrilling and uplifting to all within whose hands and minds they may fall.

May the author live to see this book win a great victory for righteousness and truth and meet with a glorious sale.

Barnesville, Ga.

A. J. Cobb.

# MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

---

"So let our lips and lives express  
The holy gospel we profess;  
So let our works and virtues shine  
To prove the doctrine all divine."  
—*Isaac Watts.*

"See where the servants of their God,  
A busy multitude, appear;  
For Jesus day and night employed,  
His heritage they toil to clear.  
Their love of Christ their hearts constrains,  
And strengthens their unwearied hands;  
They spend their sweat and blood and pains,  
To cultivate Immanuels lands."  
—*A. G. Spangenberg.*

" 'Tis not a cause of small import  
The pastor's care demands;  
But what might fill an angel's heart,  
And fill a Savior's hands."  
—*Phillip Doddridge.*

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings : for they will increase unto more ungodliness."—*St. Paul to Timothy.*

It is quite evident that no class of men have a better and freer ac-

cess to the masses of the people of all classes and conditions, than does the minister of the gospel. No man has a better opportunity to learn the real condition and needs of the people than the minister. Being among them from time to time—in their homes, on the public highways, in the streets, lanes, alleys, byways and hedges, he has the privilege of learning more of them than any other man. Therefore, if he be a conscientious man, he will at once recognize his opportunity for doing good, and proceed forthwith to take advantage of the same. It follows then that a minister of the gospel should be a conscientious man. He should be a truly converted man, a holy man. He should be sensible of the fact that he has been called of God and sent to the work of the ministry. Then he should enter upon his work with no other determination than to do his best, and to “know nothing among men, save Jesus

Christ and him crucified." He should let the world see, feel, and know that he is a man of God called to an important work and that his whole heart is in that work. He should feel the burden of the souls of men upon him; endeavoring to do all in his power, God helping him, to bring the lost ones to Christ, and strengthen those who are already in the faith. He should be a man of candor, justice, mercy, and truth. His thoughts should be engaged in seeking the best methods for saving men and women from those vices and immoral acts which not only stigmatize them in this life, but will keep them from the kingdom of God.

It is his privilege and duty, and should be his pleasure, to endeavor to make society better and purer. He should seek a higher and purer moral atmosphere, and then put forth earnest and persistent efforts to lift others to the same plane.

He should not satisfy himself with preaching a half-studied and less prepared sermon on Sunday; for this often does more harm than good; but he should seek to understand the truths of the Bible, and preach them unmixed with error, so that men may see and fully realize the great importance of right living and of *striving* to enter the kingdom of God.

He should not, under any circumstances, compromise with the world, or give up one inch of his holy ground to satisfy any personal feelings he may chance to have, or to gratify the whimsicalities of any of his hearers.

He needs to be a brave man. "God will not have his work made manifest by cowards."

The world and the Church are separated and must remain so. One is for God, the other is against him. One is engaged in the work of God, the other is serving the devil. One is striving to lift men



to a higher moral and religious standard, the other is endeavoring to plunge them into the lowest pits of crime and disgrace. One is *en route* for a better land—"a land that is fairer than day;" the other is bound for the regions of darkness and despair. One is for everlasting life, the other for eternal death. So they must forever remain separate.

The gospel minister must realize this fact, take a bold stand for God and the right, and labor assiduously for the promotion of his cause in defiance of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

If the world is to be made better; if society is to be more refined and purified; if men and women are to be elevated to a higher standard of truth, justice and morality, the gospel minister must, with his power and influence, accompanied by the word of God and the Holy Spirit, take the lead in the work.

Hence, the necessity for a closer

union among gospel ministers, regardless of race or denominational proclivities. Their "hopes and aims and fears are one; their comforts and their cares." They should not hesitate to lift their voice in unison against all crime and wrong doing from whatever quarter. Brotherly kindness should exist among them. They cannot reasonably hope to accomplish much lasting good so long as they stand apart and fight each other.

Just here another thought presents itself which doubtless, is worthy of consideration. It is this: *The moral and intellectual fitness for the work of the ministry.* That the churches generally have been too careless or thoughtless about this matter is too plainly seen to be denied. This fact has been observed by both the Church and the world.

The true value of intelligence and morality upon the part of the ministry has not at all times been



properly estimated. If so, it has not been fully known and appreciated as it should be by all concerned. The ministry has been guilty of too many almost unpardonable blunders, and subjected to not a few harsh criticisms on account of the mistakes of those in authority, thus giving the world an opportunity not only to become cognizant of the misgivings, but also to lose confidence often in those who are expected to make of themselves living examples to the flock of Christ and the moral and intellectual leaders of the people.

What is needed now is a speedy reformation of many of the habits and practices of both the clergy and Church. There is no need of trying to eschew the plain and simple truth; the Church and ministry have drifted too far from the "old paths, the good old way." They must come back and inquire for "the way the holy prophets went," and after finding it, "walk there-

in." They must take a decided and unquestionable stand on the side of the principles which the Church claims to teach and practice—especially those taught in God's word. They need to come to a fuller realization of the truth as it is taught in the Bible; for unless they conform to the teachings of that blessed Book, their profession of religion will not amount to much for themselves nor any one else; neither can they hope for any saving efficacy in their mere profession when they possess not the spirit and life of Christ. There can be no genuine religion without morality. This fact should be kept before us.

The man who expects to be a teacher of the religion of the Lord Jesus must be acceptable with God. He must be sure that he is right, and then with great boldness may he assume the role of a leader.

Ministers of the gospel should

see to it that they "walk circumspectly" before men; endeavoring to be "as wise as serpents; as bold as a lion, and as harmless as doves." Their speech should be with grace and moderation in all their conversations. As little as may be thought of it, the careless or thoughtless conversation; the "funny remarks" before the congregation and elsewhere by ministers often have a most wonderful influence in leading many who hear them to thoughts of immorality.

Because a man is a preacher is no guarantee that he should transcend the bounds of decency or pure chastity in his conversations and sermons. He has as much right to conform to the rules of common decency and politeness as any one else—even more so; for he is to be an example to others.

Ministers of the gospel should "walk in wisdom with those who are without; shun the counsels of the ungodly, and keep out of the

## 18    MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

way of sinners." They should, first of all, take heed to themselves, and then to the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers.

The work of reformation needs to begin in the pulpit. That sacred place should be kept clean. No man who is known to be morally unfit for so high a position should be permitted to enter the sacred confines of God's altar to preach his word. If there be sufficient reason to believe one is disqualified morally for the work of the ministry, the matter should be thoroughly investigated; and if there be no grounds for such suspicion, let him go free. If, on the other hand he is found to be corrupt, and its nature of the charge warrant it, he should be extirpated as soon as possible, and the Church saved from the scandal of harboring unholy men.

Ministers are surrounded by many influences, good and evil.

Their position, highly exalted and clothed with great dignity, is a peculiar one, and, not infrequently, attended with more or less danger. Their peculiar work often throws them in strange places and very singular positions. They are the servants of the people, and, therefore, have a variety of minds, notions and whims with which to contend; so that often they find themselves in great straits. Sometimes they are at a loss to know just what to do. Because of these things watchfulness is very necessary. They should be very cautious, ever watching the seductions all around them. They should also watch themselves. Many a man has been deceived by himself; for "the heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things." Then, too, they should watch over each other, not with a view of injuring one another, but in order to help overcome the seductive powers and influences of society.



and the world. Let them be strong in the Lord, showing themselves men of God; and let them unite their efforts to break down the strongholds of the devil.

They must not wait to obtain the consent of the devil before they attempt to do good. The devil never will consent to such a work. It is his business to keep down everything which tends to goodness, antagonize every effort to make men better, and to make all people his servants. Hence, the ministers of the gospel need to come out boldly and openly defy everything that would in any way give the adversary of men a stronger hold upon them. They must preach the gospel and live according to their profession.

## CARRYING THE CROWD.

---

THE Church of God was instituted for a great and good purpose. Its object first, last, and all the time, is the salvation of men. "Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost." As a means to the accomplishment of its great work, the Church seeks to ameliorate the social, intellectual, moral, and religious status of mankind everywhere. The Sunday-school, Epworth League, Missionary, and other departments are all intended as auxiliaries to this one great work. The preaching of the gospel, reading the scriptures, the sacraments, fasting, abstinence, the class-meeting, the love-feast, and the prayer-meeting are instrumentalities employed to promote practical and experimental Christianity in its purest form. Real, earnest

(21)

Christians are much needed now everywhere. Soundly converted persons are the ones the Church should seek more earnestly to admit within its pales.

More conscientious and God-sent preachers would prove a great blessing to the world.

It seems that, to a very great extent in some instances, the prime object of the Church has been lost sight of, and the people have joined in with the world to have a "good time". In some quarters very little is said about the status of church members these days. But little is said about how they are living up to their vows, or having within them the principles of the Christian religion. Only a few pastors read and explain the "General Rules" to the members and congregations. Sunday-schools and other institutions of the Church are sadly neglected in many places.

The leading thought at this time



seems to have respect only to numbers and finances. It is not an unusual occurrence to receive as an answer to the question, "How are you succeeding with your work or charge?" (These words or something similar,) "Well, I am doing very well; had a big crowd Sunday and raised — dollars." It seems that the idea is extant that a "big crowd" is essential to real success. Hence the search for the man who can "carry the crowd." If such a one can not be found, a failure is the inevitable result. Such men have often been denominated "coal-burners," "swamp angels," "flying eagles," etc., which terms seem to a careful and thoughtful person to have no real significance, unless it means one who can make a great deal of noise, "cut many shines," work many "schemes," have a "rousing big time at any cost," and accomplish but little, of any real or lasting good.

The intention here is not to raise

any objections to the man or men who can "carry the crowd," provided that "crowd" is "carried" in the right way. But right here is where the great difficulty comes. Here is where the trouble lies: By careful observation for a number of years, it has been learned that they who "carry" the largest "crowds," in most instances do less in the general advancement of the people along the distinctive and peculiar lines of Church work. They seldom do much more than "carry" their "crowd."

Most of these "coal-burners," "swamp angels," and "flying eagles," fail to enlighten their "crowds" whatever in those things which are essential to their well being here and there permanent felicity hereafter. The most they have to tell is what their "crowds" are going to do and wear when they get to heaven. Sometimes they manage to remind them of the fact that they are having many "hard

crosses, trials and tribulations in this low ground of sin and sorrow." It is with these imaginations that the "crowds" are "carried" away without ever, or at most very seldom being told by their leader of what they must do to get there and enjoy those good things so beautifully pictured to them.

It is true our people are a religious race, but there are only a few of them, compared to the great mass who have a proper conception of the Christian religion, and fewer still who live up to their profession of Christianity.

If a preacher can "carry the crowd," it is alright so far, but it is the writer's humble opinion that it is far better for the pastor to labor to have those who hear him put in possession of the spirit and power of Christ; let them learn to possess the mind that was in Jesus, be partakers of him, and thus prepare themselves for those pleasures and enjoyments of which they so fondly dream.

However much they may be warmed by the "coal-burner;" however much the "swamp angel" may move them by his singing; however much they may be swayed by the "moans" of the "moaner in Zion," or "carried" away on the wings of imagination by the "flying eagle," not one can rationally hope for glory who has not received pardon for sin and is endeavoring to live a consistant Christian life. God is opposed to all unrighteousness, and those engaged in such deeds are in great danger of his wrath being poured upon them. It is the duty of the preacher to warn the people, show them their danger, and instruct them how to avoid it. Hence, the importance of the work of a gospel minister, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom." Not the "crowds" for great pomp and worldly fame; not he who simply heareth, but he that *doeth* the sayings of Christ shall receive the blessing.

No pastor, however large or small may be his audience, should be satisfied with anything less than the social, intellectual, moral, and religious advancement of those under his pastoral care. All his emergencies should trend in that one direction. Should he fail to do "great things," as the world regards greatness, he may have the satisfaction of feeling that as God has enabled him, he has endeavored to do his best. He has done what he could.

Let the pastor then, whether his "crowd" be large or small, whether he has the high sounding title of "coal-burner," "swamp angel," or "flying eagle," ask him the question, "Which way am I carrying my crowd?" Much depends upon this.

In this world the Christian life has a beginning, a course, and an ending. The beginning must be right. It must be sure and certain. Sin is the great enemy of man. It



is his most deadly foe. He was conceived in sin. Death is the "wages of sin." Since no man can walk in the newness of life while under the bondage of sin, with its power and influence being continually exerted over him, the first thing necessary is a deliverance from the bondage of this great enemy. Sin must be renounced in all its forms—hated, loathed, left behind. The chains that hold the individual must be broken, the fetters loosed, and the shackles made to fall off. These must be done before one can enter fully upon the Christian life. The preacher who can succeed in getting, if no more, only one to see the great need and importance of this, and stop not to rest until it is done, shall have done a great work. He has brought the man thus far, and may with much satisfaction proceed to "carry" him farther in the good way. The scriptural exhortation is, "Work out your salva-

tion." Work implies service of some kind and for some one. As the Lord Jesus is the Christian Master, he is to serve him. One of the chief characteristics of the Christian is that he is a servant of God. He follows the command of his Master. Seeks to do his will with a glad heart and willing mind devoid of slavish fear.

The writer once heard a member of the Church say, "The reason I serve God is because I am afraid if I don't do so I will go to hell." That was her simple way of expressing her feelings or giving her reason for trying to live a consistent Christian life; perhaps, however, she meant otherwise. But there can not be much doubt that she expressed the sentiment of not a few Church members, many of whom have been following the leader of a "crowd," and have never had a right conception of the Christian religion. The man or men who had been "carrying" that

“crowd,” perhaps had never thought of teaching the followers along this line, or inculcating within them the principles of the Christian religion. It may be that they were too busy *burning coal*.

The real Christian serves God because he loves him—serves him with only a filial fear, such as a loving and obedient child has for his father. “Perfect love casteth out fear. St. Paul tells us, “We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.” But there are many who listen to the enchanting music of the “swamp angel,” or soar away with the “flying eagle” on wings of imagination, without once realizing the force of these beautiful lines:

“To serve the present age,  
My calling to fulfill ;  
O, may it all my powers engage  
To do my Master’s will.”

Christ must be served by direct worship and obedience. Those Church members whose highest



aim is to get to the house of worship and have the inimitable "coal-burner" fill them with the soot of imaginary happiness, must learn that only they who do God's will are truly happy. "Blessed are they who do his commandments." Whatever the Lord wills must be cheerfully and readily submitted to.

The preacher must teach his hearers that they must without reluctance or hesitating steps walk in the ways of God. Upon his law must they meditate day and night.

The Christian life is progressive. We are exhorted to "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." The possessor of the Christian religion does not stand still. He does not remain at one stage all his life. He grows. He moves on toward perfection in holiness and righteousness. He learns to hate sin wherever found, and will endeavor to rid himself of it, and

urge upon his friend and neighbor to do likewise. The golden rule will be his motto. His aim will be to live conscientiously before God, and lead a consistent Christian life. These and many other things might be mentioned which are true characteristics of a possessor of the Christian religion. But how many do we find practicing them? How many of our "crowd-carriers" are really interested in the unmistakable evidence of the development of the people along these lines?

What do we find as the result of the drawing qualities of the "crowd-carrying preacher?" Are the lives of his hearers made better? Is there a closer walk with God? Do the Church members carefully observe the rules and regulations of the Church, or are they really endeavoring to do so by the help of God? Are they careful to observe with reverence all the means of grace? Do they know and understand with some degree

of intelligence the doctrine and polity of the Church to which they belong? Unless there can be clearly observed a manifestation of interest and improvement along these lines, the work of such a pastor must theretofore have been, to some degree at least, a failure.

A careful student will observe that in most instances the "crowd carrier," or "coal-burner" does less to improve the social, intellectual, moral, and religious status of the people than any other class of the ministry. There is but little stability in what he does. As a rule this class of preachers are quick to yield to popular sentiment, or to appeal to the emotions or feelings of their hearers. They do not give sufficient thought and prayer to the duties and responsibilities of their calling as gospel ministers.

While the carrying of the crowd is not condemned, it must be insisted that whoever carries the crowd

must labor for the best possible results, and feel "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

## THE PASTOR

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HEED TO HIMSELF AND CARE FOR  
HIS FLOCK.

THERE can scarcely be any doubt that there is no class of men upon whom so much depends as that of the ministers of the gospel of Christ. The office of a gospel minister is fraught with many and grave responsibilities; tho it is the highest position that a man can fill in this world, yet, on account of its peculiar duties, it is one that requires much sagacity, humiliation, and foresightedness. None but the faithful preachers and pastors know of the many and severe ordeals, trying circumstances, inconveniences, toils and strifes through which God's ambassadors must pass in order to successfully

accomplish the task assigned them by him who is Lord of lords, and King of kings.

The work of the pastor is peculiar. It is peculiar because of the very nature of the thing to be done, its many intricacies, its variety, the stubborn opposition with which it has to meet and contend, and the different classes and individuals with which it has to deal. Notwithstanding these, it is a work that must be done. Every preacher, local or itinerant, deacon, elder and bishop, is held responsible to God for the faithful performance of the duty assigned him. It matters not how irksome the task, nor how great the sacrifice to be made, the work must be done.

The true gospel minister is called of God, sent to preach the word, to declare the truth to the people, to "teach all nations, and baptize," to testify of Christ, to feed the flock of Christ, "warn all men,



teach them in all wisdom, and present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." To do this work successfully and pleasing to God, much care must be exercised.

In our Methodist economy, the ministers have charge of conferences, districts, circuits, stations, and missions, and are called pastors. On account of the character of their work, some are called "chief pastors," some "presiding elders," others "pastors in charge." Each class having a certain work to do, the aim of which is the advancement of the kingdom of Christ on earth, and the full salvation of men. Being charged with such great responsibilities, it is very necessary that the pastor *take heed to himself*. He must mind himself; properly regard himself, and give *special attention* to himself. Thoroughly consider his calling, position, and occupation. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many

mighty, not many noble are called."

The exhortation of the apostle Paul to the elders at Miletus is very appropriate in our day. It is timely, and very important.

"Take heed to yourselves." No pastor who disregards these words of advice can reasonably hope to do good service for the people, for the Church, or for God.

Carelessness and indifference as to one's self will always prove a barrier to success in the work of uplifting humanity and ameliorating the condition of mankind generally. While one may succeed for a time in some kind of "make-shift" way, some clique or scheme, he must ultimately fail ingloriously in all the finer qualities and nobler purposes of the Christian ministry.

"Take heed to yourselves." If there ever was a time when this exhortation should be regarded, it is now, and an earnest appeal is



made to the pastors of to-day to give earnest attention to it.

TAKE HEED TO YOUR THOUGHTS.

This is mentioned first, because thoughts as a rule are the source of words and actions. Often as a man thinketh, so is he. Thought is a power within itself, and may be used for good or for evil. It may be directed to things high, noble, and heaven-inspiring, or it may take the trend of things which are debasing, and lead on to misery, ruin, and death. It may lead on to deeds of kindness, or to acts of treachery. It may be fixed upon the vain and perishing things of this world, or it may be set upon "things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

Take heed to the ideas you entertain. Let your thoughts be pure, lofty, and inspiring.

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever

things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

The work of the pastor, among other things, is to lift men up and lead them to the Savior; tell them of his power to save—even to the uttermost—till they can sin no more; to seek for the straying, call back the wanderer, and comfort those who are weary. If therefore, the thoughts are in this direction, fixed upon such a noble work and constantly engaged therein, good results may be expected and the labors crowned with abundant success. But if the thoughts be upon the vain, flashy, trivial, and debasing things of the world, if they be absorbed by the sinful pursuits and pleasures of this world, there can not be any hope of doing faithful service for the Heavenly Master.

Impure, unchaste, and unholy thoughts will, as a rule, lead to

bad and shameful results. This is one of the many reasons why the work of the Church and ministry, in some places, is almost a failure. Doubtless it may not be going too far to say there are those, perhaps, engaged in the work of the ministry whose only thought is upon the base and wretchedly miserable things of this world. They are self-called to the ministerial ranks. Called for a selfish purpose, and the whole trend of their thought is toward the accomplishment of some deed that would probably bring disgrace and disaster upon themselves, some unthinking person, and upon the Church and ministry. They may have but little thought of the high calling of God, the mission of the Church and of the salvation of men.

The gospel minister must be a man of thought, but he should take heed how he thinketh. He should think of his high calling; of the many and grave responsibili-

ties which rest upon him; of the church that demands his pastoral care; of the souls of men that are perishing, and withal, of how he may best meet these several responsibilities and acceptable service for God and his Church.

#### CONVERSATION.

A gospel minister needs to take heed to his words and conversation. The conversation should be chaste, pure, wholesome, and refreshing. Wild, rattling and questionable conversations should be discouraged and condemned everywhere and among all people, but especially among those of the ministerial rank. In the home, on the highway, in the city, in the rural districts, in the Church, in the pulpit—everywhere, the preacher should make of himself a wholesome example of pure, delightful conversation.

The call to the ministry is not a license to engage in all sorts of slang and words, the very men-

tioning of which suggests impure thoughts, and perhaps would lead to conduct, wholly immoral. Such jokes and sayings, as well as conversations which tend in the least to lead to impure thoughts, should be regarded as dangerous, and should be avoided. Indeed they are dangerous. There is no telling of the number of persons, old and young, male and female, who have gone astray and ultimately ruined and lost, whose first thought of impurity was suggested by the careless or thoughtless remarks of some one, perhaps a preacher in the pulpit or elsewhere. The preacher, therefore, must take heed to his words and conversations. He needs to guard himself in these as well as in other things.

#### ACTIONS.

It may not be out of place to remark that the gospel minister should take heed to his actions. In this, too, he should be an example to his flock. The old saying,

“Like priest, like people,” is often true, and sometimes in a way that is not highly commendable to either. Men’s actions often tell what they really are. They may profess one thing with their tongue while their actions will almost invariably prove them to be otherwise. The unguarded tongue, the falsifying lips, the treacherous hand, and the constantly wandering feet are not evidences of a good, pure and righteous life, neither are they any proof of a call to the gospel ministry. Yet, from all appearances, they are those who profess to be called to this high office and work, whose actions are constantly impressing people—especially those who are looking for better things, that something is wrong somewhere and some how. A mistake has surely been made. Angry passions, sinful tempers, wrath, malice, prejudice, bickering, and animosity are not, to my mind consistent with a pure Christianity.



and the gospel ministry. They should, as much as possible, be avoided at all times, and under all circumstances.

My brethren, in the name of God, let me urge upon you to take heed to yourselves in every particular. In your thoughts, words, conversation, and your actions. Watch them; attend to them, and guard them well. See to it that nothing be thought, said or done, that will in any way prove detrimental to the cause of our blessed Savior, and the growth and spread of pure Christian religion. Let your deportment everywhere be above reproach. Live above suspicion. Prove by your conversation and actions, yea, your life, that you have been with Christ and learned of him, and that you have been commissioned to preach the gospel of the Son of God.

#### THE FLOCK.

After properly attending to himself, the preacher's next duty is to

his flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer. The call to the ministry is not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father. Some times it is said, "Moved by the Holy Ghost to preach."

The work of the ministry is not a profession, but a calling—a commission to do a certain kind of work. The commission is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." If one has been "called" and "commissioned" or "moved," he has certain duties to perform. He should take heed to *his pastoral duties*. These are many and varied, and require great skill, tact, and patience, and a determined resolution to successfully perform every one as they come. There should be a high regard and love for the work, as well as a conscientiousness of the responsibilities resting upon him. It should be entered upon with great courage and boldness, in the fear

of God, with implicit confidence in Christ's authority and power, and steadfast reliance upon the Holy Ghost for instruction and guidance.

Visiting the sick, helping the distressed, and careing for the needy are all the work of the pastor. In the discharge of these duties, much time and care, as well as discretion should be exercised. For at the best, there will be some who will complain of neglect, slight, and discrimination. As little cause for such complaints should be given as possible.

There may be some pastors who give but little thought to these matters. They may at times neglect the poor, sick and needy, and spend the most of their time with those who are in the best circumstances and who are the least in need of their presence, help, words of comfort, advise, consolation, and encouragement.

They are not appointed over a

avored few, but over the entire flock. Hence they should be faithful, earnest and true to their calling. Watch over all the flock of Christ. Let none escape.

There is other work to which the pastor must take heed, care for. In order to systematically and successfully carry on the work, the Church is divided into several departments, each having a certain work peculiar to itself. These are more or less essential to the growth and prosperity of the Church. They serve as potent auxiliaries in carrying out the great design of the Church. The Sunday-school, Epworth League, Missionary and Publication Departments, all are of great importance to the Church. They are calculated, by proper management, to do a great and lasting good for the cause of Christ. Therefore proper care should be given them. The pastor who neglects any of these, either wilfully or through ig-

norance, is to that extent a source of weakness to the Church and ministry. He should see to it that as far as practicable, the people shall be properly instructed in every thing pertaining to the work, growth and prosperity of the Church.

Doubtless there are many persons who join and live in the Church for years perhaps, without any conception of the Christian religion. Many take the baptismal vows without knowing what those vows mean.

Many take upon themselves the obligations of the Church without intelligently understanding them. Many promise to be governed by the rules and regulations of the Church, without knowing what they are. Many pledge themselves to support the institutions of the Church, without a knowledge of any of them. How necessary for the pastor to see to it, as far as

possible, that these things be known and understood. It is a part of his work. God has committed the Church to the care of his ministers. They are to watch over it, protect it, and instruct its members in all that pertains to their growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are to be faithful servants, filling their mission with glad hearts and willing minds. Laboring constantly and assiduously with a determination to do all in their power to lift men and women to a higher, nobler, and purer life.



## YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

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This is indeed a busy age. Everybody is trying to do something. Nearly every one is on the "look-out" for some great opportunity (?) to something great. In every department of life, whether private or public, personal or general, every one who possesses any degree of energy, and has any aspiration whatever, is giving some attention to passing events; and as coming events often "cast their shadows before them," many are watching to catch the first glimpse of some future happenings so as to turn them to their benefit in some way.

To "keep up with the times" seems to be the desire of not a few among the heterogeneous masses of people of all races. Efforts for

improvement are being made in every calling and profession. Professional men are laboring to improve their talent and thus become more skilled in their professions. They continue to grapple with hard and difficult problems of every kind. Hence, new discoveries from time to time, as well as wonderful improvements over old methods.

Perseverance is a great thing.

This desire for improvement in their professions or business does not stop with the better class of individuals. It may be found in every grade of society. Thieves and robbers, fraudulent men and imposters of all ranks, ages, and classes are studying to become more successful in their respective businesses. The farmer, the carpenter, the blacksmith, the machinist, the shoemaker, the lawyer, the physician, each is endeavoring to become more skilled in his trade or profession, and thus be the better prepared to meet all exigencies.

What of the Christians, clergy and laity, old and young? Those I mean who, though in the world, are not of the world. Are they trying to make any improvement in their manner of life? Are they trying to be more Christ-like? Are they trying to be more successful in their ministerial and Christian career? Are they trying to make themselves more useful in the Church, and by their manner of life be able to exert a wider and greater influence, so that some, through them as God's instruments, may be saved? Are they living according to their profession—living a life devoted to the fear and worship of God, and striving to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ?

These are questions worthy of consideration. They should engage our attention frequently and prayerfully. They certainly demand our careful and earnest thought.

Christians need to know more

about themselves, more about God their Father, Jesus their Saviour, and the Holy Spirit their guide and comforter.

They should learn more about their profession, its requirements and responsibilities, its trials and difficulties, its present as well as its future advantages and blessings.

They should endeavor to have a clear conception of the Christian religion. They should put their religion into daily practice. It is important also that they learn the necessity of "holding fast" to their profession. It is needful that they exercise godliness, for it is great gain. All the above are essential to a spiritual growth.

What about the young Christians? To them, practically all things are new. They have entered a new sphere. New ideas and thoughts spring up within them. They are as new-born babes, "having been born again." They are now the children of God. All

about them seems joyous and pleasant, and they are happy in the Lord Jesus. There is scarcely any thought of trials, temptations and difficulties which await them. In the meantime the adversary of their souls is only awaiting a chance to begin his work. He is arranging his plans and schemes, laying his snares, setting his traps, stationing his men, and getting everything in readiness for the first opportunity to make an assault upon these young Christians.

It is during this stage of their "new life" that they need to be warned and instructed, so as to be mindful of their subtle foe and prepare themselves to war successfully against all his cunning craftiness. Watchfulness is essentially necessary. Perhaps one of their first difficulties will be with some kind of temptation, and it will require quick forethought to keep from yielding to it. Appetite, passion, ambition, presumption, self-indul-

gence, are some of the things with which the young Christians as well as the older ones will have to contend. All of which must be overcome.

“Yield not to temptation,  
For yielding is sin.”

From whatever source it may come, the devil is the prime mover in temptation. Evil associations are not infrequently the instruments of temptation. It will be well for the young Christians, therefore, to learn early to “shun evil companions.” “If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” “A violent man enticeth his neighbor, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.” Keep out of the way of sinners.

A distrust of God’s providence will often lead to temptation. The devil undertook to tempt Christ by bringing about distrust when he said to Jesus, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” The Sa-



viour met him, however, with this prompt and important reply: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Young Christians should learn to trust in God at all times and rely upon his promises.

"Watch, lest ye enter into temptation," is a wholesome exhortation, and by heeding it, not only the young, but the older Christians may be able to overcome all temptations.

The blessed Saviour said, "Who-soever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." It would seem then, and it is true, that self-denial is essential to being a true follower of Christ. The act of self-denial embraces many things, and is not so limited nor flexible as some may think or desire it to be. Young Christians must learn to deny themselves of all those pursuits, habits, and practices which are for-

bidden in God's word, which have no tendency to the praise and worship of God, but instead thereof, will impede their own religious growth and lead others away from Christ. While serving the Lord "with gladness" themselves, they should let their lights so shine as to cause others to glorify God. They should take to all their thoughts, words and actions.

There may be many practices and amusements which they think are harmless and therefore feel unwilling to give up. Many little "no-harm" sins they may cling to tenaciously, but in order to be consistent Christians, they must deny themselves of these so-called "little sins." It is true some one may remark, "There is no harm in this; it is only a trifle, nothing bad in it." But,

"Little drops of water,  
Little grains of sand,  
Make the mighty ocean,  
And the beautiful land."

These little "no-harm" things when summed up, very often make great mountains of sin towering between us and our Heavenly Father. It may be only a little to-day and a little to-morrow—grain after grain, drop after drop, step after step, but the mountain will rise higher and higher, the water in the cistern will rise nearer to the top, and the end be surely reached. The safer way is to leave all those questionable practices and pleasures alone. Come out from among them.

Young Christians should be careful in the selection of their companions. Failing to do this may cause one to be lead into dangers perhaps of the worst kind. "Are they Christians?" "Do they love God's Church?" "Are they in sympathy with the cause of Christ?" "Do they love to read the Bible and converse upon religious topics and other important subjects?" "What of their moral standing?"

etc., etc. These are important questions and the answer to them should determine who shall be our associates.

“My soul, be on thy guard ;  
Ten thousand foes arise ;  
The host of sin are pressing hard  
To draw thee from the skies.”

There are so many traps set and snares laid to catch a young Christian that he can not be too careful and watchful at all times, and withal he must continue in prayer to God for strength to overcome all the surrounding influences that tend to lead him astray.

Young-Christians should be careful in the selection of their reading matter. There are numbers of books, papers, and periodicals which they might well afford to leave alone. Many of the novels and family story papers serve only as broad avenues to ruin and disaster. In these many are caught and lead to destruction. Remember the exhortation of the Apostle Paul: “Hold fast to your profes-

sion." Do not be ashamed nor afraid to confess Christ your Saviour before men; for he has said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

Again, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." The matter of confessing Christ is a very important one, and upon it much depends.

Whatever it may cost; whatever may be the deprivations or sufferings, it is good to confess Christ boldly everywhere before men. For there surely will come a time when all will feel greatly the need of having him own them. If you are ashamed of Christ now, if you



deny him now, in that most needy time he will be ashamed of and disown you.

The young Christian must learn to hold on to his profession tenaciously.

The Apostle Paul urges a great and good motive for Christian firmness: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." This passage leads us back to the law of Moses which provided for a priest and a high priest. The Jews were separated from all other nations; the Levites were separated from the rest of the Jews; and the family of Aaron was separated from the rest of the Levites, and the high priests were chosen from among the decendants of Aaron.

Why were these separations and distinctions? Doubtless they were designed to teach the people their distance from God; their utter un-



worthiness to approach their Maker; the holiness and greatness of Jehovah, and the great need for a mediator. Who has not felt the need of a mediator—some one to stand between him and God—to present him before a throne of grace, and present his offerings of devotion?

But let us return; we have a great High Priest. The high priests under the law of Moses differed, doubtless, as men do now from each other. Some were more distinguished for learning, wisdom, and piety than were others; their personal character carried more weight and influence than that of others; therefore, more confidence was placed in them.

The greatness of Jesus Christ is beyond measure. Think of his wisdom—he knows all things and reads men's hearts as we read books. Think of his power—winds obey him, water followed his instructions, diseases fled at his fiat,

death was vanquished by him, and the grave yielded to his command. Think of his greatness! the Creator and Preserver of all things; the Ruler and Judge of all.

Another thought: We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens. The high priest under the law of Moses went into the most holy place once a year with the atoning blood to make atonement for the sins of the people. When the Jews saw him enter, it was a moment of deep and solemn interest. But our High Priest has passed into the heavens, gone with his own blood, gone to offer the incense of his own intercession.

## YOUNG CONVERTS.

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“Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain,  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away the stain.”

“But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Takes all our sins away ;  
A sacrifice of nobler name  
And richer blood than they.”

Our High Priest is “Jesus the Son of God.” His being Jesus connects him with ourselves—the Son of Mary, therefore, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, partner of our nature, sharer of our griefs and brother to our souls. His being the Son of God connects him with the divine Being. He is one with God, the eternal, immutable Jehovah. Thus he forms the link which unites to God.

Here then is the motive address-

ed not only to the young, but to all Christians. We have a Mediator who has made atonement, who presents our offerings of devotion in his own name, who knows our weakness, our sufferings, our trials, our temptations, and can feel for us—who intercedes for us and who can furnish all needed grace. A present help in time of need. Seeing that *you* have such a one as he, *hold fast your profession.*

To profess Christianity in the days of the apostles was no small matter. It involved the most serious consequences. Home and property, reputation and life were imperilled, and the Christian was exposed to danger, torture, and death. He knew not when he would be seized and dragged before magistrates to be imprisoned, exiled, or put to death. With these consequences before them, men counted the cost, and deliberated well before they made an open profession of Christianity. Even after

having made such a profession, these things often gave rise to the temptation to give up their faith.

How strong the appeal then to the early Christians! "HOLD FAST. Everything is against you. The people are against you. Your friends and relations are against you. The rulers are against you. Your peace and liberty are gone. Your property is liable to be taken away any day. Your life is in hourly peril. Notwithstanding all these, *hold fast.*" Is it any wonder that some fell away? Is it a matter of surprise that the apostle had to urge the most powerful motives in order to induce them to remain firm?

But we live in a different age and are surrounded by different circumstances. Legal restraint, armed opposition and the perils of the first Christians no longer exist.

No such reasons appeal to the Christians now to abandon their profession of religion, to deny their

Lord and Saviour and turn back again to the beggarly elements of the world. The young Christians of this age have no such things to confront them as did the young Christians in the days of the apostles. Still they are in great danger and numbers turn away from Christ. There are certain contaminating influences surrounding them which tend to draw them away from the holy commandments.

Let every young Christian with a fixed purpose and resolution, with determination of heart, cleave unto the Lord. Serve him with gladness. "Worship him in spirit and in truth."



## SECOND-CLASS CONVERSION.

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"I want a principle within,  
Of jealous, godly fear ;  
A sensibility of sin,  
A pain to feel it near ;  
I want the first approach to feel  
Of pride or fond desire ;  
To catch the wandering of my will,  
And quench the kindling fire."

—*Charles Wesley.*

I remember conversing with a pastor sometime ago who had just closed a "revival" or series of meetings which resulted in no conversions. After talking for quite a while, he said, "One thing I notice in the churches these days; there seems to be so many second-class conversions." He explained that he meant to say, "There are many persons who, though they were once members of the Church, for some cause have been expelled or

have left it of their own accord. During the revival they come up and make another profession of religion and join the Church again."

The term is a new one and seems rather peculiar. Nevertheless, it set me to thinking. I find there are many persons who are given to this kind of procedure or practice.

Whether the term "second class conversions" be a good one or not, I shall not attempt to say. But I do know that it is often the case that the pastors in many places report "great revivals" during the year; that a number have been happily converted and added to the Church; but when they report to the annual conference, the membership is no larger than that reported at the previous conference. Sometimes it is smaller.

I am lead to believe that a great deal of this so-called conversion is simply a delusion—a great mistake, caused by the most intense excitement and unusual amount of noise,

and little or no reasoning which prevails during some of the so-called "revivals." Many persons are received into the Church before they are converted or have fully made up their minds to be Christians, because of the great sensation around them.

Sometimes persons who know they are not converted are begged and urged by the pastor to join the Church. Being thus influenced, they connect themselves, take the vows, etc., but are not in there long before they are longing for their old habits and practices, and ere long are back to them, and soon or later out of the Church.

It seems to me that great care should be exercised in receiving persons into the Church. They should not be unduly persuaded to join. If they have religion they should have sense enough to know it. If they wish to become members of the Church, certainly they know that fact better than any one else.

I do not believe that truly converted persons are ignorant of the "great change" that has taken place within them. Surely they are able to realize that,

"I once was lost, but now I'm found,  
Was blind, but now I see."

As to their joining the Church, I believe they know when they desire to do so, and need no unusual persuading.

Again, there are persons truly converted who join the Church and at that time mean to live right; but on account of carelessness, inattention to the rules and regulations, failing to give heed to the teachings of God's word and walking in his ways they fail to obtain those Christian virtues mentioned by the Apostle Peter, and soon become "blind and can not see afar off, and forget that they were ever purged from their sins."

Is there no remedy for this growing danger? Can we not have more *first-class* conversions?—per-

sons who are truly awakened, firmly convicted and soundly converted and such as have been born again? Can we not get more people into the Church who will not have occasion to join the second, third, and fourth time?

There are two thoughts I would like to suggest which might be of some benefit at least.

First, the PREACHING. I would not for one moment think of one disparaging word about the good old time revivals. Too much good has been accomplished by them; too many souls have been happily converted in them; and even now too many good results emanate from them to be slightly spoken of. Many a man and woman are now in the Church doing good service for God who were reached only through the medium of the good old time revival. Many happy souls are now in glory, dwelling in the blessed sunshine of God's Holy presence who first heard his word



effectively in the good old time revival.

No, no; I would not say one word to discourage the revivals.

Nor would I undervalue the earnest efforts put forth by some of God's faithful servants who have labored assiduously for the sound conversion of men and women.

Many of them have been earnest and faithful for years. They have labored untiringly, and God has graciously blessed their work.

Many souls have been made happy; many convinced of the error of their way, and have turned to God and been soundly converted through the simple, but powerful, preaching of God's word by these good men. But there are some who are not so successful, who do not feel the real burden of souls, who are rather seeking numbers—careing more for quantity than for quality. Hence, they will do more for an increase in the number of their membership than for the real



conversion of men. They are the ones who cause so many second-class conversions.

During a revival, as well as other times, the preaching should be done in such a manner that it would be sure to reach the *heart*, and not the ears only where the *fancy* alone of the hearer would merely be "tickled." Let the words come from the heart of the preacher and go to the heart of the hearer with the spirit and power of God.

The reason should be appealed to more. A man should be made to think of his condition and feel the necessity of a Saviour. When this has been done, the conversion is not likely to be of the spasmodic kind which lasts only for a season and makes a "second-class conversion" possible; but being sound, there is a greater probability of its lasting.

The preacher should not labor merely to excite his hearers by some methods often resorted to,

and which are questionable, to say the least of them, for often in such cases the "conversion" and religion of some who are "converted" under such circumstances will, like the preaching and the revival with all their undue excitement, soon pass away.

Second, the PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION. If these were taught more from the pulpit and elsewhere, doubtless there would be better Christians and better churches; more first-class conversions and less of the other kind.

When once the principle is fixed within the heart of a Christian, he will almost invariably feel the necessity of ever living according to his profession, and as a result, he will grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. He will not think himself something when he is nothing. He will be possessed of a "zealous godly fear, and will engage all his powers to do his Master's will."

The Apostle Peter after "confirming the saints in the hope of the increase of God's grace," adds, "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." If this exhortation be heeded and the process followed by the Christian family, there will not be many more "second-class conversions."

*Second-class Conversion!* Doubtless this is the cause of the Church being so poorly attended by its members in many places; the pastor kept busy with investigations and Church trials finds it very difficult to please his members. Perhaps this is why there are so many poorly arranged and uncomfortable church buildings, poor Sunday Schools, the pastor is hardly half supported, the General Funds go

unpaid, and everything is in general disorder.

Let us all pray and labor and use all our influence for a better state of affairs—for good, wholesome and lasting first-class conversions.

## CHURCH OBLIGATIONS OR CONDITIONS OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

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“Put thou thy trust in God,  
In duty's path go on ;  
Fix on his word thy steadfast eye,  
So shalt thy work be done.”  
—*Luther.*

“The stern behests of duty,  
The doom-books open thrown ;  
The heaven ye seek, the hell ye fear,  
Are with yourselves alone.”  
—*J. G. Whittier.*

“Whate'er thy race or speech, thou art the  
same ;  
Before thy eyes, duty a constant flame,  
Shine always steadfast with unchanging  
light,  
Through dark days and through bright.”  
—*The Ode of Life.*

“Do noble things, not dream them, all day  
long,  
And so make life, death and that vast  
forever, one grand sweet song.”  
—*Charles Kingsley.*

“Every man has obligations which belong to his station. Duties extend beyond obligation, and direct the affections, desires and intentions, as well as the actions.”

—*Whewell.*

At this busy stage of the world's existence when everybody is engaged in doing, or trying to do, something to benefit himself, when in the social, civil, and political spheres of operation there is great activity, when the Church and the world seem to be on such good terms, when Christianity seems not to be exerting as much influence and power over men as is needed, and there is a lack of deep spiritual interest in the affairs of God and his Church, it does not appear to be out of place to call the attention of Church members and Christians generally to a matter which seems to have been almost entirely forgotten, or at least sadly neglected by not a few of them.

This forgetfulness or neglect is not confined to any one particular Church, but extends through them



all, more or less. There is a want of real genuine Christian activity everywhere. Church members need to be aroused to a sense of their obligations and duty. They should be urged upon to "inquire for the old paths, and walk therein." A line should be drawn clearly and distinctly between the Church and the world.

There has been, in many places, a shameful neglect of many Christian duties, a great falling away from the spirit and practice of true Christianity, and a wonderful compromise has been made with the world. Of this fact the world has a very lucid knowledge, and takes advantage of the situation daily. Such a drift of affairs, unless stopped, will ere long bring the Church into disrepute.

Christians need to get nearer to Christ. They should live in such a manner as will not fail to cause more prominence to be given and

due respect paid to the Church and the teachings of Christ and the apostles.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Ye are the light of the world.' He also commanded, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Again, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." This, doubtless, is the condition of those Church members who fail to live such lives as are in keeping with their profession.

Though there may be numerous faults, and consequently dangers in the way of many professed Christians, it is not always an easy matter to get them to give a patient hearing to those who are in a position to advise and offer them words of warning and admonition.

They are often unwilling to receive such instruction as will do them good. The faithful servant of God may stand in the sacred desk, or during his pastoral visitations, warn and admonish, but little heed is given him. Let it be hoped that those who read these lines and ponder over them will receive such an impulse as will at least cause them to think of their obligations to God and his Church.

This is an age of utility. Men care to do only those things and follow those practices which in the end will prove beneficial to themselves. There is much to be hoped for by those who with a fixed and honest purpose, live in strict conformity to their obligations to God and to his Church.

But what is an obligation? It is "that which binds; the binding power of an oath, vow, duty, promise, or contract; it is duty imposed by law, human or divine, to the fulfilment of which one party is bound

to another." I think it was a Mr. Flemings who said, "Moral obligation of a free agent implies a law, and a law implies a law giver. The will of God, therefore, is the true ground of all obligations strictly and properly so called. It is an act which binds a man to some performance, a contract, a bond."

Now, if every Christian—every member of the Church will rightly consider his relation to God, and remember that *his will must be done*, he will readily understand his obligation to him.

Perhaps there are but few persons who fully realize their position when joining the Church. They either do not understand the vows they take, or are not careful to regard them. There are many persons who join the Church without any knowledge whatever of the rules and regulations thereof, and they place themselves under obligation to live up to their obligations as best they can, God helping

them. They go in blindly without knowing just what is to be expected of them, that is, without having carefully considered the duties and responsibilities of a church member.

I have always thought (I may be wrong in my opinion) that no one should join a church, take the vows, and pledge himself to a strict conformity to its rules and regulations without first carefully and prayerfully considering the many duties which may devolve upon him, and as far as possible, knowing the rules and regulations of the church. Making such preliminary preparations he will be the better prepared to assume the duties thereof. Persons wishing to join the Church are required to give the pastor satisfactory assurance of their desire to "flee the wrath to come," and to be saved from their sins "

There must, also, be evidences given of their faith in God. These are preliminary steps. After this



they are brought before the Church and received according to the prescribed form.

Baptism is an outward sign or token of an inward and spiritual grace. It is the entrance into the Church. No one is regarded as a full member of the Church until he has been baptized. Before receiving baptism, he must make certain promises known as the *Baptismal vows*. He must promise to "renounce the devil and all his works, and to constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commandments." This, indeed, is no trifling matter. It is a promise made, not only to man, but to God.

Just imagine a man standing before a congregation of living witnesses whose eyes are fixed upon him, listening eagerly to catch the answer to every question. Realize that God, our Father, with his all-seeing eye is looking upon the scene, and also listening. Think,



too, that he knows the purpose of that man's heart, knows every thought as it comes forth in his mind. He watches the whole transaction from beginning to end, and the whole is recorded in the "Book of remembrance." Here the applicant stands and the pastor inquires, "Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow or be led by them?" This is, indeed, an important question, and demands a great deal of thought and prayerful consideration.

There should be a strong determination, a fixed purpose, and the applicant must feel that he is prepared and has come to a steadfast resolution, to give himself and all that he has to God, and as far as in him lieth the power, to do only such things as are pleasing to God.

In this vow he promises to dis-

solve all friendship with the devil, to disown him, to engage no longer in his services, to come out from the world, and to crucify the flesh. All the works of the devil are to be rejected, disclaimed, relinquished, and abandoned. A few of these he must know are falsehood, larceny, evil thoughts, evil speaking, drunkenness, or the drinking of spirituous liquors as a beverage, fighting, quarreling, brawling, returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, needless controversies, hypocrisy, doing to others as he would not they should do to him, doing what he knows is not for the glory of God.

Ostentation, gambling, all questionable resorts and practices, avariciousness, selfishness, unchaste conversations, wrathful tempers, angry passions, sinful words and actions, must all be given up.

Now, if after a careful and prayerful meditation, the applicant decides that by the grace of God he will cast off all these things, he is

prepared to answer from his heart, "*I renounce them all.*".

The above is only the first step, the first question, the taking of the vow. There immediately follows something else. There must be given an expression of his belief. He must acknowledge his belief in "God the Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth; in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; that he rose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come again, at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead; the Holy Ghost, the Church of God, the communion of saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life after death."

In this faith he must be baptized.

But one more promise must be made—a promise upon which so much depends, and which must be kept, else all will come to naught, and the soul be lost. The applicant must promise to obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life. What a promise! What a responsibility! Will it be kept?

We may speak of faith, hope, mercy, and love; but unless there is a compliance with God's commandments, a submitting to his authority, and that, too, with a willing and ready mind and a glad heart, no one need expect to be saved.

Faith in Christ, hope of heaven, the mercy of God to us, and the love we have for him prompt us to obey his holy will and commandments. True saving religion is a religion of obedience. It is not a slavish obedience which is almost invariably wearisome and galling,

but filial and loving." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

David was able to say to God, "I have chosen thy precepts \* \* \* \* thy law is my delight." There were other precepts besides those of God, but David seems to have reached the conclusion, after making a trial, that there were none better or more suitable than those of God. Therefore he chose them. The law of God was his delight; hence he was cheerful in his obedience. So with every true Christian—"his delight is in the law of the Lord; and his law doth he meditate day and night." So then, the promise to keep obediently God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life, is a great one and God holds us to it.



But this is not all. One more step is to be taken before the applicant can be fully recognized as a member of the Church, and be in position to enjoy all its benefits and privileges. After receiving baptism he is again brought before the Church and informed that, "none who have arrived at years of discretion can remain within its pales, or be admitted to its communion, without assuming its obligations."

It is demanded of him whether he is resolved to assume these obligations. He is asked, "Do you solemnly, in the presence of God and this congregation, ratify and confirm the promise and vow of repentance, faith and obedience, contained in the baptismal covenant?" To this question he answers, "I do, God being my helper."

He is then asked, "Will you be subject to the discipline of the Church, attend upon its ordinances, and support its institutions?" Again, he answers, "I will



endeavor so to do, by the help of God." He is then recognized as a member of the Church and bidden welcome to all its privileges, and the right hand of fellowship is given him. Thus he becomes a recognized member of the Church, having assumed its obligations.

Will he fulfil these? Have all who came before done so? Are all members of the Church doing so now? As to the first question, it remains to be answered. But we need only search the records of the Church, visit the Church, or live in the community to find the answer for the last two questions. All have not been faithful to their obligations; all are not firm now in their adherence to the promises made at the altar. Many grow careless and unconcerned, and become blind and forgetful that they were purged from their sins. Religion to them has become more of a duty and less of a privilege, more of constraint, less of choice. The Church is not

attended early and regularly now as it once was.

The liberality and zeal for the cause of Christ and the Church are but little seen. The Church and its obligations have become a burden too hard to endure. The world with its pleasures and amusements is more in favor. The parlor social is preferred to the class-meeting, and the theatre is more interesting than the prayer-meeting. Duty has become a load, worship a great task. God's house has lost its attraction.

O, Christian! you who read these lines, is it so with you? Have you forgotten your obligations? Have you fallen from your high, holy, and blessed standing? Have you forgotten that singular and happy period of your life when you had a bright prospect of glory? Are you now in the desert waste far away from God? Remember and ponder over well the obligations you took when joining the Church. Think

of how you prayed; of the prayers and anxiety of your friends.

Change your mind, come back and pray for

“ \* \* \* \* a closer walk with God.”

Return unto the Lord. “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

“The way the holy prophets went,  
The road that leads to banishment,  
The Kings highway of holiness.”

Get into that way and continue to travel therein. Strive to live with Jesus. Let him dwell in your heart by faith. “If thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.” If the Holp Spirit depart from you, nothing will be left but sorrow, wretchedness, discomfort, despondency and ruin. Resolve *now*

“So shall my walk be close with God,  
Calm and serene my frame :  
So purer light shall mark the road  
That leads me to the Lamb.”

One more thought. All Christians are under some special obli-

gation to put forth every effort to avoid evil of every kind, and endeavor to practice that which is good and pleasing to God and beneficial to themselves and their neighbors. They should feel that they are bound to pursue a right course throughout the whole of their life.

By the providence and grace of God they have been greatly favored in so many ways. Truly God has been good to them. In mercy he has heard their prayers, forgiven their many offenses and shortcomings, and richly endowed them with many things which are so necessary for their peace, joy, happiness, comfort and pleasure in this life, as well as to fit them for the happy life beyond. A thought of these things should inspire us all to seek a closer walk with God.

The preacher and all Church officers are under special obligations up to which they should feel themselves bound to live.

Like the great apostle the preacher should feel, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." He is under obligation to "preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." To do this at all times requires a very strong determination, much zeal, and great courage. Without these a preacher may fail to do his whole duty.

There are people who may be unwilling to hear the pure unadulterated word of God. "Sound doctrine" may be too much and too pointed for them. Their evil practices and habits may be too often exposed and condemned by the plain and simple preaching of the gospel of Christ. This they are unwilling even to *try* to stand.

The gospel truth is too mighty for them. Hence they "turn away their ears from the truth." They seek for a "popular Christianity,"

and a "popular preacher." One who will not be "so severe," and whose efforts in the delivery of his sermons will be to meet the "popular approval" of the masses, rather than to please God, properly warn and instruct the people; and thus cause them to strive to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

No preacher should turn away from his obligations to God, and to those to whom he has been sent to preach his word.

So with all Church officers; they have certain duties to perform, and their obligations bind them to the faithful discharge of the same.

Nothing should be permitted to keep them from putting forth every possible and reasonable effort to act their part well.



## THE LOVE OF THE WORLD.

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Where am I now? from what a height  
Of happiness cast down!  
The glory swallowed up in night,  
And faded is the crown.

Through the wild world of sin and woe,  
A banished man I roam ;  
But can not find my rest below,  
But can not wander home.—*C. Wesley.*

The past has bequeathed many things to the present. Among the many things it has left there can be found no richer inheritance than its lessons of wisdom.

Every branch of science and knowledge, and all enterprises are, more or less, indebted to the past. It furnishes science with the foundation stone upon which to rear her magnificent temples. It gives to art the models and principles for her grandest achievements. It supplies the statesmen with the

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chart by which to guide the ship of state. It opens to the student flowery fields of knowledge, richly rewarding his toils.

What of the Christians? Has the past no information for them? Is there no lesson they can learn from this broad field of instruction such as will do them good, serve as a warning to them as they journey through life, and give them some needed stimulus to continue in their chosen profession as followers of Christ? Yes, there are ample stores of useful knowledge for the anxious inquirer after religious truth. For the Christians the past has a voice of instruction and warning. There is much to be gained from the numerous examples left by the past as "foot-prints on the sands of time."

Examine Christian character as it was in the days of the apostles, and you will find that among the hindrances to its maturity is the love of the world.

The apostle Paul furnishes us with a case which may serve as an appropriate illustration of the danger of the love of the world.

Doubtless, all New Testament readers have read of Demas. He is mentioned by Paul as being his fellow-laborer. He was associated with Luke in a salutation to the Collossian Church. Very likely he was a preacher of the gospel in high repute for piety with the apostles. But when Paul was at Rome the second time, and was about to be put to death as a martyr, Demas shamefully forsook him and fled to Thessalonica.

Why did he do this? Paul gives the reason for this conduct in one of his letters to Timothy. He states, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

Commenting on this act, Mr. Elliott says, "He left the apostle in his trials and sufferings because he (Demas) loved safety and ease, and

fleeting pleasures of this world, and had not the Christian fortitude to share the dangers, or the Christian love to minister to the sufferings of the nearly desolate apostle."

The love of the world seems to have been the only reason for Demas' apostacy, at least it is the only one given by the apostle, and from it we may readily, and perhaps, reasonably infer that the love of the world is an evil of serious character, and attended with gloomy consequences. It seems to have been so regarded by Paul, for he attributes the apostacy of Demas to that cause.

St. John cautions us against this love: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

But what is implied in loving the world? It is the choice of this world and the things herein in preference to heaven and the things thereof. All are guilty of this love who wilfully neglect the things pertaining to eternal life and devote their time and talent to worldly objects. Whenever religion is neglected, or made secondary to something else, or its precepts are violated in order to gain wealth, popularity, patronage, or to accomplish some other worldly end, the person so doing is like Demas—loves this present world more than he does God, or heaven. The love of the world may be seen in the adoption and practice of those tenets of society, which are contrary to the spirit and practice of true religion.

“You must associate only with those of a certain class.” “In family bereavement you must absent yourself from the church and society.” “Worldly amusements are



innocent." "Religion and business are different things. They are widely separated, the one having no connection with the other." "Do as you like when away from home."

Now lets see; "You must not associate with those who are not of your class—must not be found with them." No matter what the condition of others may be, it matters not how anxious they are to find peace for their troubled souls or to obtain forgiveness of their sins, you must not be seen with them endeavoring to show them the way, offering words of advice and consolation.

The circle in which you move would frown upon you, should you be seen doing such a thing. Just think of it! Is this your religion? Is it the religion of the blessed Saviour?

Ye bereaved, is there any consolation in staying away from God's Church and from among his peo-



ple? Can the world give any solace to your broken heart or wounded spirit? Is it not a great truth, and has it not been demonstrated time and gain, that

“Earth has no sorrows that  
Heaven can not heal?”

Why stay away then from the house of God, where the preached word and the songs of Zion can give so much comfort and joy in times of sorrow and sore bereavement? It is far better to let such doctrines go, for they can do no good.

Again, dancing, gambling, and the drinking of spirituous liquors as a beverage, are the things of this world. The singing of songs which do not pertain to the worship of God, and the frequenting of places of ill-repute with no good design, belong only to this world. No one who loved God should be found guilty of doing such things. All who do these things are lovers of

this world and its pleasures more than of God.

Doubtless, there are not a few Church members who are pious at home, who lead a life of usefulness, are always in attendance at the class-meeting and prayer-meeting, and the Sunday-school, but when they happen to go away from home to some place where they are not so well known, they have an opinion, it seems, that because they are away from their home environments they are at liberty to relax their religious zeal, forsake the Sunday-school and Church services, and engage in worldly pleasures.

Such thoughts and practices should be avoided by the truly religious. To serve God in spirit and in truth is a pleasant task for the real Christian. To be engaged in the service of the Lord is an agreeable occupation to him who is not worldly-minded. Singing, praying, reading the word of God, conversing about the things of God, and

trying to live a consistant Christian life, are all pleasing to the children of God

Yet, there are many professors of religion who prefer those pleasures and amusements which are worldly in their nature, and bitterly opposed to the life of God in the soul. Such pleasures are those of the intemperate, the gambler, the libertine. These, as well as others, are the pleasures of the world, invented by the world, conducted by the world, recommended by the world, and patronized by the world.

They have always been denounced by God and his Church, and are now. No one in the full enjoyment of religion desires to participate in them. No one can take part in them, and at the same time retain the spirit of true devotion and religious zeal. It is a truth, "The love of God and the love of earthly things are incompatible. If you give place to the love of the world, the love of God can not dwell in

you. There must be some potent reason for the condemnation of worldliness by the scriptures.

The effect of loving this world in the case of Demas was that it led him to forsake his path of duty. We are informed by John that, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The love of the world expels the love of God from the heart. It supersedes and renounces it. When one begins to love the world, he begins to grow cold in religion. When he begins to engage in the trifles of the world, he forgets to serve God as he ought.

"Ye can not serve God and mammon."

Paul refers us to a duty of religion which should be attended by every Christian: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by

the renewing of your mind that ye may prove that what is good, and acceptable and perfect will of God."

The love of the world brings in a new system of religion which is opposed to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The teachings of the Bible are forgotten, being partly or wholly ignored. The doctrine of God's Church which has been taught for ages is wilfully disregarded. The vows necessary to church membership are rendered meaningless and useless, and a worldly church becomes the sanctuary to which they flee. Worldliness is dangerous, because it violates the whole system of true religion—love to God—denial of self—a life of usefulness, and the spirit of prayer.

In the early days of Christianity persecution could not destroy the Church; but now worldliness often makes serious invasions into it and causes many to turn away. Let every Christian firmly resolve to



“renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that they will not follow after them nor be led by them.” Engage no longer in them, but spend your days in the service of the Lord. Beware of every foe—every crafty and plausible foe of the true spirit of Christianity. “Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world.”

Read carefully and prayerfully these words of Charles Wesley:

“Lovers of pleasure more than God  
For you he suffered pain,  
Sevearers, for you he spilt his blood ;  
And shall he bleed in vain?

Misers, his life for you he paid,  
Your basest crimes he bore ;  
Drunkards, your sins on Him were laid,  
That you might sin no more.

The God of love, to earth he came,  
That you might come to heaven ;  
Believe, believe in Jesus' name,  
And all your sins forgiven.



Believe in him who died for thee,  
And sure as he has died,  
Thy debt is paid, thy soul is free,  
And thou art justified."

## CHASTISEMENTS.

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“ 'Tis my happiness below  
Not to live without the cross ;  
But the Saviour's power to know,  
Sanctifying every loss.

Trials must and will befall ;  
But with humble faith to see  
Love inscribed upon them all,—  
This is happiness to me.

Trials make the promise sweet :  
Trials give new life to prayer ;  
Bring me to my Saviour's feet,  
Lay me low, and keep me there.”  
—*Cowper.*

There is a beautiful analogy between the conduct of divine providence and the operation of divine grace. In the providence of God ample resources are free for all.

Nature provides the sunlight, the dew, the rain, the air, the seasons, and water in such a bountiful supply that there can be no monopoly

and no exclusion of any one, however poor. These the rich and the poor may enjoy alike. These great blessings are all free and abundant. They may be had and enjoyed, more or less, everywhere.

The grace of God has likewise provided a Saviour who invites all, and promises eternal life to all who believe in him and keep his commandments. The Holy Spirit who strives with all, and who will guide all (who permits him to do so) in the paths of peace and safety; the gospel which is preached to all, and gives glad tidings of salvation to a perishing world; the Church which is open to all, and in which all who will may live and prepare themselves for the life beyond, in the world where God and angels dwell, and the Sabbath which is given to all as a day of rest.

The provisions of nature are useless unless men avail themselves of them and labor to secure their ben-

efits. The vast resources of light, air, and water are all in vain when we cease to make use of them. So with the grace of God. The gospel offers to all a glorious provision, but "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

Of what benefit to us is the incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ the Saviour, if we believe not in him and live up to his teachings?

What good may we expect from the Holy Spirit, if we refuse to follow his instructions or permit him to preside over our thought, words, and actions?

Again, when the spirit of God finally abandons a man, God gives him up as lost, and there is no hope of his salvation. But so long as the Spirit strives with man, that is, resists and opposes his downward course, produces inward feelings of desire for religion and condemnation of sin, just so long there is hope; for God has not

given him up. The Lord has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

The providence of God is conducted on the same principle.

Saith the Lord, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." When God ceases his disciplinary process of correction and chastisement, the man is abandoned and there is no hope of salvation for him.

There is a difference between chastisement and judgment. A chastisement is a fatherly correction by means of affliction in some manner. It is, according to Mr. Webster, "The act of chastising; pain afflicted for punishment and correction: discipline."

A judgment is an abandonment either to prosperity or to destruction.

By the judgment of providence some men are abandoned to prosperity and have their good things in this life, and others are crushed or destroyed, as a warning to the

living. But not until they are given up are these judgments sent. So long as salvation is in their reach, God rebukes and chastens as occasion requires

“Behold, happy is the man who God correcteth. Therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.” “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction; For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”

God “rebukes” by his word and Spirit, and “chastens” by the afflictions of his providence.

It should be remembered that these rebukes and chastisements are intended for the good of those who receive them, and serve also as a warning to others.

The afflictions of divine providence are chastisements designed to lead us to repentance.

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” These afflictions are



adapted to this purpose, because they discover the evil that is within us. We are told in the scriptures that, "The heart is deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked.

Doubtless there are many sinners, unconverted men and women, who never seriously think of their salvation until they are afflicted in some way. It is then, for the first time, they think of accepting the blessings offered by Christ. Many people, in the enjoyment of good health and strength, are so diligent in striving for the pleasures of this world, that they have, as they imagine, no time for the study of religion and things of God.

The ministers may warn and instruct, exhort and counsel, but no heed is given to them. So with some professed Christians. Notwithstanding they profess a hope in Christ and express an earnest (?) desire for salvation, they exhibit great carelessness—are really unconcerned, and allow themselves to

wander far from the commandments of God. Hence the necessity of chastisement.

The Christians of Leodicea deceived themselves with regard to their spiritual condition. It seems that they thought because they were "rich and increased in goods," they had need of nothing. They did not think that they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Hence they were charged with being "luke warm, neither hot nor cold." They did not have that religious fervor, earnestness of zeal, and true devotion which they should have possessed. They were destituted of good works. They were indifferent, and did not exercise as they might and should have done, the gifts which were given them by their Master. They seemed to be perfectly content with their condition. They did not feel that anything whatever was needed. All was well with them.

Such is the condition of many Christians now. They are neither "hot nor cold" They are altogether "lukewarm"—neither ardent nor zealous about the things of God. They are satisfied with being merely members of the Church, having no interest, anxiety or care respecting anything in, or in any way connected with the work thereof. They appear, many of them, to be not only indifferent to the welfare of the Church and the salvation of men, but of their own souls as well.

The Pharisees made a great mistake when they considered themselves righteous.

They would boast in their prayers of their goodly condition, and thank God that they were "not like other men." Jesus once said to his disciples: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Herein exists the necessity of chastisement. It tests and reveals character. It lays open the heart. It en-

ables a man to know himself—just what he is, and what he is doing.

What discoveries are made by suffering and affliction? Sometimes intense selfishness is revealed—self-righteousness, self-confidence, self-love, self-esteem, self-praise, self-admiration, self-approbation, self-complacency, and self-everything. All is of and for self, and none of and for God. Sometimes there is much complaining and murmuring. Things don't go to suit certain ones. They can't understand why such a thing should be done. God's will is not agreeable. Everything goes wrong. Sometimes infidelity and skeptical questioning of the truths of God's word are unmasked. Sometimes an alienation of heart is discovered, which charges God with injustice, cruelty, and wrong.

Chastisements rebuke the pride and vanity of our hearts by showing our weakness and helplessness and dependence. Success often in-

spires self-confidence and fosters pride and vanity. Such was the case with Alexander the Great; such was the case with Nebuchadnezzar, and with many great (?) men of olden times, and such is the case with many of this age. They soon forget themselves and go beyond their bounds. Affliction is a great rebuke to self-confidence. It shows man how weak and dependent he is.

Chastisements rebuke the worldliness of our hearts by showing the vanity and emptiness of the world.

There is a strong tendency to worldliness in our nature. It begins to operate in early life when lovely visions of the future pass before us. It receives strength in the conflict with care and want. It increases with the desire for independence. If not checked in some way it will lead on and on until we are lost beyond recovery.

Chastisement shows the folly of a worldly mind. It recalls our



mind to the fact that there is a God, that we have souls as well as bodies, and that we have to live in eternity as well as in time. It proves that the world can not make us happy, because it can make no provisions for adversity, and yield no solace in sorrow.

Chastisements rebuke the negative character of our piety by showing the need of sympathy and kindly offices. How natural for men to forget the claims of society and their duty to others, and confine their attention to themselves. Thus they become negative and selfish in character, omitting the sacred duties of love and mercy. Or their love may be wanting in force, vigor, when it ought to be ardent, earnest, glowing, burning, and zealous. It may be narrowly contracted when it ought to be widely expanded. It may be selfish, when it ought to be liberal.

Among all, Christians especially, there should be a disposition to ex-



ercise compassion or favor, a willingness to help those who are in need of succor. The Bible teaches the universal brotherhood of man and the duty of an all-embracing love. No race, class, or condition should be beyond our love and mercy. The Saviour, while upon earth, illustrated and exemplified this duty, e. g., the parable of the good Samaritan, and his own holy life of benevolence.

Afflictions and sufferings are the rebukes of our heavenly Father, are his voice calling us from our couches of ease and self-indulgence, his rod smiting us until we feel the need of sympathy and kindness ourselves, his warning to us to present "our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," that we "be not conformed to this world."

Chastisement may seem hard sometimes; it may rob us of many worldly pleasures, and perhaps, possessions; it may put us to some

apparent disadvantage; our sufferings and afflictions may be many and long; but because of them we may know that God loves us, that the Spirit is still striving with us, that mercy is still on our side, that there is still hope of salvation, and that, if we will only despise them not, but turn to God, and live as he would have us do, we shall live with him in the heavenly world, shall have "a building not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.

## PARTAKERS OF CHRIST.

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The largest words are not always the most important. It is often the case that the smallest word controls the sense of whole sentences and entire paragraphs. For instance the little word "*so*" is frequently used to convey an idea of something vast infinite and unmeasured; as when Jesus said, "God *so* loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The word *so*, though one of the smallest in the sentence, conveys an idea of the vastness of God's love, and shows to what extent it was used for the world. He "*so* loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to die," etc.

A similar instance of the importance of small words occurs in the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, where he says, "For we are made partakers of Christ, *if* we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Here we observe that the conditional term *if*, though a very small word, determines the sense of the passage, and conveys a most wholesome and valuable truth.

In the above passage the little word *if*, marks the connectiton of human with divine agency, and points out the relation of man to the plan of salvation.

The reference of St. Paul in the above verse is remarkably comprehensive and throws a strong light upon other portions of the scripture. By reading the chapter (Hebrews iii.) it will be observed that the apostle first refers to the fact that many of the Israelites who started with Moses and Joshua from Egypt to the land of Canaan,

failed to reach their destination and fell in the wilderness. This he applies to the Christian life.

His next reference appears to be, and doubtless is, to the remarkable discourse of Jesus to the Jews, in which he astounded them by declaring the necessity of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. In John vi. 53-54, we read, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

It seems that Jesus gave the sense in which he used the language with sufficient clearness for those who heard him; for they seemed not to care to inquire into its meaning.

The next reference is to the "rest of God's saints." The Sabbath is a rest and a type—Canaan was a rest and a type—but Christ is the rest itself. Whosoever has Christ



has that rest; and whosoever holds to Christ, will hold to that rest.

Full salvation is what God's people are seeking for; and what I desire to call attention to is how we may be sure of salvation.

1. *By beginning with confidence in Jesus.*

The apostle Paul agrees with the Saviour in his expression, but diverges far from the common opinion and practice of men. It is no strange occurrence for seriously awakened persons to begin the religious life with some preparatory process of long or shorter duration. Doubtless there are many who begin their religious career without first "counting up the cost" and meditating well upon their undertaking.

Let us not forget the fact that our desire is salvation; that to be saved forever more, we must be a partaker of Christ; that in order to be a partaker of Christ, we must have confidence in him, and this



confidence we must hold fast unto the end. Paul informs us that, "We are made partakers of Christ *if* we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

Confidence is the beginning of true Christian religion. It is the first principle in all business transactions. Whatever we undertake we must have confidence in ourselves or some one else as to the successful results. We do not enter into any business with a man unless we have confidence in him—can trust him.

Religion is a business, and in entering upon it we make an agreement with the Lord. This covenant should not be made unless we have confidence in him and are willing to trust in him for the faithful performance of all that he has promised.

We are to have confidence in the ability and willingness of Christ to save; for we are told that "he is

able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." We must have confidence in his words and invitation, confiding of soul and body to his care.

This confidence must be *held fast*. There should be no turning loose. We are to hold on tenaciously. Instability is ruinous to success. No man can reasonably hope to accomplish much who is constantly changing his plans and his pursuits.

The person who would be a partaker of Christ must not only begin with confidence, but must continue with it. Our daily experiences of what the Lord does for us and how he helps us, should serve to increase our faith and confirm our hopes.

It is to be regretted that some professed Christians are constantly on the "change." They have no abiding place, and are in no particular way. They are first in this way, then in that. They allow

themselves to be carried about by every wind of doctrine. Many are as often out of the Church as they are in it.

To be a partaker of Christ, and consequently saved, we are to hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. It is true that sometimes we may meet with serious difficulties. Obstacles of various kinds may come in our way; we may pass through strange vicissitudes; but we should remember that "we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God."

"Are you weary, heavy laden,  
With the toil of many years?  
There is joy within the present,  
Tho' we see it thro' our tears,  
Darkest clouds will quickly scatter  
If we will but chase the part."

Daniel, tho cast in the lion's den, did not lose confidence in God. He was delivered. The three Hebrew children had strong confidence in God, so that the Lord was with them in the midst of the fiery fur-

nace. Job declared, "Though he slay me yet will I trust him."

We need to partake of the spirit, nature, graces, righteousness and life of Christ. "Let this same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." With these we shall be better prepared to pass through the world, and live with Jesus in the heavenly world above.

## SUNDAY-SCHOOLS AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORKERS.

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(Annual address delivered before the Fort Valley District Sunday-school Convention, at Fort Valley, Ga., July 23, 1896.)

*Ladies and Gentlemen:—*

It is, I assure you, a pleasing task to me to attempt to deliver to you the annual address of the Sunday-school Convention of the Fort Valley District, of the South Georgia Annual Conference, of the C. M. E. Church. My wish is that I possessed the ability to do so in a befitting manner, and at the same time say something that might prove to be beneficial and instructive, not only to you, but to the many Sunday-school workers of this District as well as throughout the entire connection.

I am deeply sensible of the great  
(133)

work—its importance, its many responsibilities, and the far-reaching and beneficial results of a well regulated and a properly managed Sunday-school.

Too much can not be said of the good work the Sunday-schools have done and are doing now, in the training of the minds of our youth, and implanting within them the principles of Christ and his Church. We look with much pride and great reverence to the noble and persistent efforts and sacrifices of those who have gone forth to labor, spending their means, time and talent in this worthy institution and commendable work—a work which takes the front rank among all the auxiliaries to the Church of God, and challenges the admiration of all good people—a work which is paramount and demands our most serious and prayerful consideration.

It is to the Sunday-school that we are to look, to a very great extent,



for the shaping of the minds of our boys and girls, so that as they grow to womanhood and manhood they may lead useful lives, and thus reflect credit upon themselves, their family and community, and be an honor to all in whose presence they may come.

It is to the Sunday-school that we must look, in a large measure, for the future Church. The Sunday-school of to-day is to be the Church of to-morrow. It is to the Sunday-school we are to look for the early training of our little people in the first principles of God's laws.

To the Sunday-school we must look for the teaching of the children—in a simple way—the word of God, and the leading of them, step after step, until they are fully able to comprehend just what God requires of them, and see the great importance and necessity of doing his biddings with a glad heart and willing mind.

It is to *this* school that we are

to look for the early implanting of the principles of the Christian religion within the hearts and minds of our youth, and the careful nourishing thereof, until they shall have matured.

All the above is stupendous, and yet to the faithful and true, a pleasing work.

I contend that the Sunday-school has a work to do that can not be (reasonably) expected from the pulpit. Its work and methods are of such a character as to reach the youngest minds. Its simple methods are calculated to reach and interest all, more or less, of every age and condition, thus preparing them for the teachings to be had from the pulpit.

In many instances the Sunday-school is the precursor of the Church. As simple as are its methods, it must not be forgotten that they are attended with grave responsibilities, and that much is re-

quired of those who go forth to their discharge.

They ought to be earnest, faithful and true men and women who will with credit perform the duties and responsibilities incumbered upon them by the Sunday-school.

They should possess a willing mind, ready hands, and a keen conception of the work before them, and labor assiduously for undoubted success. With these there must be a firm resolve to prosecute the work, overcome every obstacle, conquer every foe (if such there be) and gain a decided victory for God and his little ones.

Having a knowledge of the great work before them, it is of much importance that all Sunday-school workers prepare themselves and enter at once upon it. They should begin with a determination to succeed, and never relax their efforts until they are satisfied that the work has been done successfully. They should see to it that

proper means are adopted for the happy attainment of the object desired.

Whether officers or teachers, they should be deeply interested at all times in everything which would tend to enhance the interest of the school, and bring to it the sympathy and support of all within its reach.

They should endeavor to secure the hearty co-operation of the parents and guardians of the children; for unless this is done, there can hardly be much hope of its ultimate success.

The objects and methods of the Sunday-school should be clearly defined and thoroughly understood in order to do the greatest good and benefit those entrusted to our care by leading them on to useful lives. Thus is proven the advantages and blessings of the institution which profits by our efforts and becomes a blessed boon that shall last through the declivity

of ages and the cycles of eternity. There should be no aimless methods, or indirect objects; neither should there be any misunderstanding of what we are attempting to do. But, under all circumstances, there should be well directed methods, a fixed purpose, and, as far as possible, a full comprehension of the means to the end desired. Without these, much time, labor, talent, and means will be spent in vain.

Uniformity of methods within a given radius (say a district) and unanimity of purpose and action within a school have much to do with the successful execution of the work of a Sunday-school. They contribute largely to the promotion of its cause, the intensifying of its interests, and the acceleration of its growth and prosperity. Without these there may be rather slow progress, loss of concern, and deterioration of all that is connected with it.



It seems to me that there would be but little if any doubt, of more pleasing results of our efforts if there were more conformity of methods in our several schools, and greater harmony of action among our officers and teachers

These matters should be carefully considered by our Conventions from time to time, and special efforts should be made, in my humble opinion, to have one system for the schools throughout this District. The several schools should be in closer touch with each other. Their plans and modes of procedure should as nearly as possible be alike.

The schools in the more rural localities demand our special attention. For some cause they are, with few exceptions, suspended during the winter and most of the autumn and spring months. Just why this is so, I should not like to undertake to explain; but one thing is quite certain, such action



greatly retards the progress of the school and church in such places, and continues to cripple the work once begun.

Practical means should be adopted and earnest efforts put forth by all concerned to keep the schools in operation all the year. I see no good reason why this should not be done. Doubtless, if our pastors and superintendents were to give the matter their special attention, they could make a much-needed improvement in this matter.

This Convention will do well to give this matter some consideration. The pastors and church officers should go to work at once endeavoring to put their houses of worship in good comfortable condition; this, of itself, would go far towards removing the obstacles and insuring greater success.

Again, pastors should manifest more interest in the Sunday-school. It is not enough for them to be present; they should take an active

part in the Sunday-school work. The pastor is the chief man of the school, and as such, it should be as far as practicable, under his personal supervision just as much so as the church. As far as possible, he should have a fair knowledge of all those who teach in his school. He should, as far as possible, see to it that they are morally and mentally, as well as otherwise, competent for the position they fill in his school.

I almost invariably regard it as a very bad sign when I see a pastor setting away back in some corner or other quiet place in the church, or remaining on the outside during school hours. Such action tells some things which I shall not mention here. If nothing more, he should at least see that the school is properly conducted, and occasionally make a "round" of the classes in order to see how they are being instructed. He should

let the pupils see that he is interested in them.

In every school there should be, I think, a training class for teachers. Whenever practicable, such a class should be taught by the pastor.

It is earnestly hoped that during this convention we may arrive at some definite conclusion as to how we may better promote the interest of our schools, adopt a more uniform and systematic method for carrying on this great work, and form a new and more determined resolution to go forward, and spend more of our time, talent, and means in maintaining this institution which is so closely allied to the Church of God.

## A DEEPER MEANING OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL CONVENTIONS.

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(An address delivered before the Fort Valley (Ga.) District Sunday-school Convention at Perry, Ga., July 15, 1897.)

*Ladies and Gentlemen:—*

For the second time as president of this Convention, it is my duty to deliver to you the annual address. Since our last meeting, doubtless all of us have had, in some way, varied experiences in our Sunday-school work. To some, success has come as a reward for the efforts put forth, while there are others who feel that their labors to a great extent have proven to be fruitless.

It is encouraging to us, however, to know that we are not always to judge of the good we have done, or failed to accomplish by the re-

sults which immediately follow our efforts; for these results may not be lasting.

Sunday-school workers, like all others connected with the Church, who are faithful and true, desire the good they do to be lasting if possible. Because we fail to see the good results of our labors immediately bearing precious fruits and gladdening the hearts of many, we should not feel that we have toiled in vain. Good and continuous cultivation in the proper season produces the most wholesome fruit. It is not unfrequently the case that great and good results, like large and heavy bodies, move slowly, but with sufficient energy to push every obstacle out of the way. So the earnest Sunday-school worker, supplied with sufficient energy and a desire to accomplish good, will succeed in overcoming every difficulty and gain-

ing a decided victory for the cause he has espoused.

The labor of a conscientious Sunday-school worker is like casting bread upon the water to be "seen and gathered after many days." There are many useful men and women in the world filling responsible positions—positions of trust and honor in Church and State, who owe their success largely to the early training they received at the hands of good Christian teachers in the Sunday-school. The memory of them is dear, and to them they often refer with great pleasure. So then, however much or little we may think we are doing in the Sunday-school, if our hearts are in the work, and if we continue to persevere, we shall have no cause to feel that we labor in vain

It is my purpose to speak to you at this time on the Deeper Meaning of the Sunday-school Convention. There is always greater or less sig-



nificance given to all institutions, whether they be of the Church or world. There are people who believe that there is no good whatever in secret societies. They regard all secret organizations as a source of evil. They never have a good word to say about such secret orders as the Pythians, Masons, or Odd Fellows, because from their standpoint they can not see any good in them.

As some people see it, there is no utility in the Church, Quarterly, or District Conferences. Yet they are all important and necessary to the wellbeing of the Methodist Church, the successful accomplishment of its work, and the advancement of the cause of Christ according to our peculiar economy.

Many people say they can not see any need of presiding elders and bishops in the Church, but their failure to see and recognize the importance of such officers does not in the least destroy their usefulness.

We are unable to tell the amount of sorrow and suffering there would be were it not for the societies just mentioned. All of them serve their purpose, however much people may oppose them and say they are of no good.

So with the Sunday-school Convention; simply arguing against it does not destroy its usefulness. It has been said by some that no good comes of such conventions. But the saying so does not make it true. There are others who regard them as unnecessary burdens inflicted upon the Sunday-schools.

I claim that there is great utility in the Sunday-school Conventions. A great significance is attached to them, and if properly fostered, much and lasting good will result to the Sunday-school and Church.

I fear the Convention has not been fairly and properly considered in its deeper meaning. It has not been regarded in its proper light. There are those who attend these

meetings from time to time, but see nothing in them beyond the singing of a few songs, the reading of a few "essays," some of which are taken from some noted author *verbatim et literatim*.

Many persons regard the Convention only for its "social features," and nothing more. There should be no wonder that such people see no real good in them. With such persons, the Convention is only an occasion for spending a few days in profitless pleasure of getting a kind of recuperation that does not recuperate.

I have heard pastors say, "O well, the Convention does not amount to anything; it is simply an unnecessary burden and expense." Such pastors can be far better understood if you learn more about their labors (?) in the Sunday-school, and the interest (?) they manifest in the children.

Some people regard life only as a great burden inflicted upon them,

but they seem to like it very much. However much they may complain of it, they seem to enjoy bearing its burden and suffering its afflictions. They seem determine to live as long as they can, and die only when they can not do otherwise.

So with the Sunday-school Convention; it matters not how much they complain about its inutility, shallowness and barrenness; however much they may suffer under its burdens and expenses, the people, for the most part, seem to like it, and are always ready to attend them. I would have you know that there is a far deeper meaning, a much greater significance to be attached to the Sunday-school Convention than the features mentioned awhile ago. When properly conducted, and attended with sufficient interest by persons deeply concerned in the Sunday-school work, these Conventions will result in much good.

Those people who are really interested and who are devoted to the work come to these conventions with a higher idea and a nobler purpose than that of mere social enjoyment. The programs are mostly arranged with a view of attracting the attention and deeply interesting those who attend.

The preparation, reading, and discussion of papers are intended to awaken a deeper interest in the school work generally, to make better some special feature or plan, to adopt, if necessary and possible, some new and needed method by which the school can more successfully prosecute its work, to enlist the sympathy and aid of those who appear not to (possibly they do not) have any concern whatever for this department of the Church, in order to bring about a more united action upon the part of those engaged in the work.

There is a deep meaning in the reading and discussing of special



well-prepared papers. It all means something; it is after something; it reaches something; it accomplishes something. Then again, there are the reports from the several schools. After the reports are read, the delegates are questioned as to the method of conducting their school, the arrangement of their plan of work, their method of teaching the lessons, the kind of literature used, and other important matters connected with the school. Then, too, such subjects as "The Pastor in the Sunday-school," "The Relation of Parents to the Sunday-school," "The Duty of Parents Respecting the Children and the Sunday-school," "The Eligibility of Women as Superintendents," "The Qualification of Superintendents and Teachers," "The use of the Catechism in Sunday-school," and many other important matters might be discussed with much interest and benefit to the school and Church.



The mutual exchange of ideas and plans is always helpful to earnest Sunday-school workers. Much more might be said ; but for the present this will suffice. Let us learn to regard these conventions in a different light from that in which some have considered it.

Let us realize that from them we may expect much good.

## KEEP TO THE RIGHT.

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“Be sure you are right, then go ahead.”

—*David Crocket.*

“Right is right since God is right,  
And right the day will win;  
To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin.”

Two gentlemen once met on a street in a certain city. One said to the other in a jocular manner, “Keep to the right as the law directs.”

Suspended from a crossbeam on many of the bridges spanning streams of water throughout the country may be seen an index board on which is printed in large letters this note of warning, “KEEP TO THE RIGHT, AND WALK YOUR HORSES AS THE LAW DIRECTS.”

Recently my attention was attracted by the above notice over the bridge which spans the eastern

branch of the Potomac river at Washington, D.C. As I stood and looked at the notice first, and then the bridge, the thought came to me that there may be some persons who, seeing that note of warning, and then viewing the bridge with its strong pillars, the well-arranged and apparently-substantial iron and steel work giving every indication of strength and safety, might be inclined to ask, "Why is such a warning necessary?"

"What harm can come of permitting a team to trot across this bridge?" Why should one be directed to "keep to the right?" The reasons are plain enough, and the answer may be given thus: "*In order to avoid danger.*"

By keeping to the right there will be less danger of meeting some one coming from the opposite direction, and hence teams may go and come with but little, if any, interruption. By walking, one team is not apt to run upon another in

front, and probably cause some damage. If the teams were permitted to run across the bridge, there might be some danger, from continual jarring of, loosening the bars and bolts which hold the great structure together, thus causing them to fall off and perhaps bring about some sad disaster.

Again, one of the spans of this bridge is so arranged that it can be raised so as to permit the passage of vessels beneath. A careless driver might happen to come along when this span is open, and before a warning could be heeded, he with his team might be plunged into the water beneath, and receive serious, if not fatal injuries.

Hence the note of warning. It is much better to heed the warning, "Keep to the right and walk your horses." From this we may learn a lesson. "Keep to the right," from a moral point of view, is an advice that is suitable for all people, at all times, in all places

and under all circumstances. It suggests the idea that there are two ways, or two sides—a right and a wrong—going in different directions and leading to some result, either good or bad.

Mr. Webster defines Right, among other things as, “That which is correct; the straight course; adherence to duty; obedience to lawful authority, divine or human; freedom from guilt; the opposite of moral wrong; a just judgment or action; that to which one has a just claim; that which one has a legal or social claim to do or to exact.”

The admonition, then, “Keep to the right,” is given in order that every person may avoid danger or difficulty; for these must surely come to those who continually go wrong.

If people will content themselves to go about in a promiscuous manner, first this way then that, first to one side then to the other, right

or wrong, they are apt to meet with difficulty somewhere. They might get in some one's way unnecessarily, or interfere with some one's business, and thus cause trouble that might have been avoided.

If we will keep on our own side, (the right) attend to our own business affairs, and let those of others alone, we are not liable to meet with any serious difficulty.

By taking time, walking, watching carefully as we go through life, and not permitting our teams of thoughts, words, and actions to run in all directions, we may avoid jarring, loosening, or breaking the bolts and bars of good society and true morality; and should there be any danger ahead, we may observe it in time to shun it, and thus save ourselves and others.

The warning, "Keep to the right," leads us to infer that there is action, and this analogy is used here to point out a line of action,



and to show that it is the duty of every person to do right according to the will of God, and to conform to the standard of truth and justice. To *learn* and *perform* this duty is very necessary. It is essential to the peace, happiness, and prosperity of all people. It is the one important lesson that all persons, old and young, everywhere should learn and practice.

Much of this strife, prejudice, and misunderstanding among men and nations to-day is caused by the failure of so many men to learn and practice this important duty.

It is right that a man should deal justly with his neighbor in all things. But how many there are who from day to day, unhesitatingly disregard this duty, and make it thier business to study to wrong their fellows.

In order to deal justly with his neighbor, it is necessary that a man keep in his mind that "There is a law—a supreme law, the de-

mand of which is, that every one shall do right." There are no exceptions to this law. It has gone forth, and all should, without hesitation, obey it.

It may be seen then that there is a line—a straight line—drawn by which we are to regulate our thoughts, words, and actions.

It has been said that "Our acts are the only things in our power. They not only form the sum of our habits, but our character." Hence a person is judged by his actions, and the decision is rendered accordingly, whether it be a good or bad action.

Although there are not unfrequently deceptions, as a rule, actions reveal the true character of a person, and it is not always difficult to ascertain the true position of the actor or agent.

Actions generally are the result of some purpose formed within, that is, when one has been in the habit of exercising his volition, and

of willing what he does. Accordingly the action depends almost entirely upon the motive. If, then, the motive be right, (and it should be ) the action in most cases will be right.

To keep to the right, one's intention must be in the line of right, for it is not an easy matter to do right when our whole design is to do otherwise.

Again, it has been said that, "To act right is the safety valve of our moral nature." It seems that it would have been better to say "to *think* right," or better still, "to *think and act right*," for the thought usually comes before the action. Good thoughts, as a rule, produce good words and good actions. Great care should be taken to have our thoughts in the right line; for if they are right, the words and actions will almost invariably be right.

Mention was made awhile ago of

a person being in the habit of willing what he does. A man may have an evil will, and it may be his purpose to act wickedly. It may be the purpose of his life to disregard all that is right and just. Hence, the necessity of a good will; yet not only a good will, this is not enough; for a good will does not always produce good deeds. There must be moral courage and perseverance. A man must have the courage of his convictions.

The will must be educated, and this education must begin as soon as possible.

“The right time,” says Locke, “to educate the will aright is in youth. There is a certain time when our minds may be enlarged, when a vast stock of useful truths may be acquired; when our passions will readily submit to the government of reason; when right principles will be so fixed in us as to influence every important action in our future lives. But the season

for this extends neither to the whole nor to any considerable length of our continuance upon earth. It is limited to but a few years of our term; and if throughout these we neglect it error or ignorance is, according to the ordinary course of things, entailed upon us. Our will becomes our law, and our lusts gain a strength which we afterwards vainly oppose."

We often hear the expression, "I speak and act according to the dictates of my conscience." Hence, the opinion of some that in order to render an action good, it is only necessary to have the approval of the conscience. But it must be remembered a man's conscience may become so scared that it is incapable of dictation, or the conscience itself may be misguided.

Mr. Alexander in his Moral Science says, "Conscience is the judgment of the mind respecting duty, and as no man's knowledge is perfect or infallible, it follows, there-



fore, that so far as there is error in the understanding in relation to matters of duty, just so far the conscience will be misguided. The question at issue, therefore, is whether an action wrong in itself can be considered as a good and virtuous action if the agent believes that it is right. If the affirmative were true, then the discovery of truth would be of no value, for obviously upon this principle error is just as good as truth. But as soon would we believe that darkness is as good as light to direct us in the way which we wish to travel.

Again, this theory supposes that a man is under no law but his own opinion, or the dictates of conscience; that therefore, which is a sin in one man may be a duty to another in precisely the same external circumstances and relations, which would be to confound all moral distinctions.

The knowledge necessary to duty is within reach of every man, and



he needs only to have the disposition to seek after it.

Guard well your actions. One wrong action often leads to another, just as one false step will lead to another. In order to avoid both errors, much care should be exercised in seeking for the right.

It is often the case when persons know that they have done wrong, and because they think it is known to the public that they satisfy themselves by the continuance thereof. This is a mistake. Having learned of their error, they should as speedily as possible find the right and keep to it.

“Two things,” says Alexander, “are necessary in order to determine that an action is right: first, that the state of the mind of the agent be such as it ought to be; and secondly, that the action be in conformity with the law under which we are placed; for the very idea of morality supposes us to be under a moral law.”

It is not intended to urge here that men should not obey their consciences; for they can not well do better. The error does not consist in the obedience to the dictates of conscience, but in not following the right rule by which they should be guided, or with which they should have a thorough acquaintance. Keeping to the right has to do with our treatment of our neighbors as well as with ourselves; this is a very strong reason why we should put forth greater effort to keep ourselves in the right. If every man lived to himself, moved in an atmosphere altogether independent of, and shut in from, other men, perhaps he might be excused if he chose to go wrong. But, "No man liveth to himself," and being surrounded as he is, by his fellow creatures, he must of necessity mingle with them from time to time, and his influence must be exerted upon some one.

What, then, must be the result, if, from indulging in wrong practices, his character is blotted and his reputation sullied? Will there not be danger of his enticing some one else to engage in the same practices and meet with the same fate as a consequence? The very fact that every man has an influence and a following should serve as an incentive to all to strive the more earnestly to keep to the right so that no one can truthfully say, "You led me astray." "You are the cause of my downfall."

First of all, a man must learn to treat himself right. He should see to it that he makes as few mistakes as possible in dealing with himself. He must guard his own character and reputation. It is folly to say that such a man does no harm to any one but himself. The very fact that he treats himself wrong is almost proof positive that he does an injury to some one else.

Every man should have self re-

spect, love the truth, right and justice; and these must at all times be foremost in his mind. He should be stable, not double-minded. He should have the right purpose, a line of action which always tends to the right. Let a man have the *will* and the *courage* to keep himself right, and his neighbors will have no cause to fear him.

A bad man in a community is watched by every one. His name is on the tongue of everybody and but few, if any, speak well of him. He is dreaded by all and is regarded as a menace to the peace, happiness, and prosperity of that community. People without the will or courage to do right, or failing to put them in action, have been, and are now, the cause of much of the strife between men, communities, and nations. The following lines are very suitable for those who are destitute of the courage to do the right:

“Courage, brother, do not stumble,  
Though thy path be dark as night  
There’s a star to guide the humble,  
Trust in God, and do the right.

Though the road be long and dreary,  
And the end be out of sight ;  
Foot it bravely, strong or weary,  
Trust in God, and do the right.

Perish policy and cunning.  
Perish all that fears the light ;  
Whether loosing, whether winning,  
Trust in God and do the right.

Shun all forms of guilty passion,  
Fiends can look like angels bright ;  
Heed no custom, school or fashion,  
Trust in God, and do the right.

Simple rule and safest guiding,  
Inward peace and shining light ;  
Star upon our path abiding,  
Trust in God, and do the right.”

Men are often prompted from a selfish motive to go in the wrong way in order to accomplish some desired end. Forgetting, or ignoring self-respect, the laws of right and justice, they hurry along frequently without seriously thinking of what they are about to do, and thus they disobey that rule which



says, "Always do unto others as you would have them do to you."

Failure to keep to the right is the cause of men being guilty of wronging their neighbors out of their hard earnings, making promises which they have no intention of fulfilling, and violating the laws of physical, intellectual, social, moral and religious liberty.

It is the cause of all frauds which exist in our marts, business transactions, political and social and all other spheres of operation, not excluding the Church. Instead of daring to keep to the right, men so often seek to do that which they know to be wrong.

It is not by action alone that men are apt to go wrong. Many are guilty of doing so in their conversations. There is a right line of conversation to be pursued. A loquacious person is liable sometimes to take the wrong course, and stir up no little confusion.

We are exhorted to "bridle our



tongues," that is to have them under such control that we can guide them aright, and when necessary, keep them still. Earnest endeavors should be made to keep that little member to the right.

The apostle James tells us, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity, \* \* \* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." "The tongue," says he, "can no man tame." However, by earnest and persistent effort to keep it to the right, and by keeping a strict watch over it, it may not do so very much harm.

How many hearts have been broken, friendships severed, homes rendered unhappy, peace and happiness destroyed, husbands and wives separated, honorable and lovely women driven to despair and ruin, promising and worthy young men driven to the lowest haunts of society—the gambling den, the drinking saloon and places of illrepute—families and sometimes whole communities changed from their peace

and quietness to a state of confusion by the wild rattling conversation of some careless person (or persons) who fails to guard his tongue.

It has been the cause of good reputations being tarnished, the good name of honest men and women destroyed, society in many places disrupted, and the Church thrown into the wildest kind of confusion. It has estranged lovers, turned fathers against their sons, mothers against their daughters, husbands against their wives, and wives against their husbands. Truly the tongue is a dangerous member of the human body.

How necessary is it to keep to the right in all conversation! My friends, be careful, *very careful* how you handle the name, reputation, and character of any one. Remember that your conversation should be guarded as well as your action; for words sometimes cause actions

which are not very pleasant, to say the least of them.

It is not enough to have a will merely; for men often have a will, but are too pusillanimous to put it into action.

Surroundings often prove an incentive to men to do that which is wrong. To please a friend, to accomplish some desired end, or to accommodate himself to certain circumstances, a man is apt sometimes to do that which he is fully aware is altogether wrong. But in every instance where the peace, prosperity, reputation, character, and happiness of ourselves or our fellowmen are at stake, we should have the moral courage to stand up like true men and women, and as far as possible in all things and under all circumstances, do that only which is right and just.

Again, there is a right course to be pursued by parents in the training of their children, and they should endeavor to follow it; for

indeed the future of all children depends largely upon the *kind* and the *amount* of training they receive at the hearth-stone in the family circle under the parental roof. A neglect here during the days of childhood may cause much trouble in the future.

The wink or laugh at a child's disobedience at home may cause shame and tears abroad. Too much negligence now may cause a broken heart in the future.

The scriptural exhortation is, "Train up a child in the way he should go."

If we were to stop long enough to think of the waywardness of a large number of our young people and their seeming worthlessness, we might be led to the conclusion that either the right course has not been pursued in their training, or there has been a great departure from the instructions given when they were younger.

So many young people have al-

ready gone astray, and quite a number now seem to be bent in the same direction. So alarming has become the drift that the question has often been asked, "What shall we do to save the young people?"

How many young people have been encouraged to go wrong by the careless neglect of their parents who were not as careful as they ought to have been in setting before them right examples of proper living.

Fathers and Mothers, beware! Be careful how you train your children at home. Watch over them. Have a right course and see that they pursue none other.

This same note of warning is applicable to those to whom the instruction of our children is intrusted—school teachers. They should see to it that they have such a course as will tend to lead the youth to a higher social, intellectual, and moral plane.

It has been said that, "The great



end of training is liberty, and the sooner you can get a child to be a law unto himself, the sooner you will make a man of him."

But there are so many people who entertain the wrong idea of liberty. They regard it as being the privilege of doing whatever they please, regardless of the peace, happiness, and prosperity of others. The better way to regard liberty is "the power and privilege as well as a bounden duty to do right."

This is the only liberty worth having; the thought should be deeply impressed upon every girl and boy, man and woman.

Education is a great power. It has assisted greatly in the advancement of the wheels of progress and civilization. But it is a grave question, whether it has done its whole duty in lifting up the moral standard of all those who have been fortunate enough to possess it.

It depends largely upon the kind



of instructions given, the impressions made, and the principles instilled by the teacher, and the course pursued by the student, whether the influence of the education received will be exerted for good, or evil.

The Church has done more for the production of good in the world than any other institution known. Yet, there are instances where they who are representatives of the Church have sadly neglected their duty and privilege. Instead of speaking and doing the right, they have compromised with the world. They have failed to lift up the standard of truth and justice as they should have done.

As a result, there can be but little, if any, doubt that thousands of people have suffered for that wholesome instruction which the Church alone, either directly or indirectly, is expected to give. This note of warning, "Keep to the

right," may with much propriety be given to the parent, the teacher, the preacher, and the Church, as well as to all men, women, and children, and organizations of whatever kind.

## OUR RACIAL NEEDS.

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(First annual address delivered at Haygood Seminary, June 1887.)

“God gives us men. A time like this  
demands  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith  
and ready hands :  
Men whom the lust of office does not  
kill ;  
Men whom the spoils of office can not  
buy ;  
Men who possess opinion and will ;  
Men who have honor—men who will not  
lie ;  
Men who can stand before a demagogue  
And scorn his treacherous flatteries  
without winking ;  
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above  
the fog  
In public duty ; and in private thinking—  
For while the rabble with their thumb-  
worn creeds,  
Their large professions and their little  
deeds,  
Mingle in selfish strife, lo ! Freedom  
weeps,  
Wrong rules the land, and waiting  
Justice sleeps.”—*Anonymous.*

*Mr. President, Teachers and Students, Ladies and Gentlemen:—*

I think myself highly honored to be selected by you to deliver this, the first annual address before the faculty, students, and friends of what is hoped to be one of the leading institutions of this Southland. I assure you that it affords me no little pleasure to attempt to comply with the request you have seen fit to make. I must confess that I feel unworthy of the honor you have thus conferred upon me. I hope I may be able to say something that will at least convey some idea of my appreciation of your generous invitation, and at the same time awaken a greater and deeper interest in the educational work of our people.

There can be no doubt that this is an occasion long looked for by many who are here to-day. Some have thought that such would never take place in this little village, situated among the sand hills

of Southwest Arkansas. This is the first time you have ever been called upon to come together for such an occasion in this part of the State. To-day, for the first time, you witness the closing exercises of an institution of learning which we hope, ere long, may become famous for its good work and thorough instruction.

After carefully considering the matter, I have reached the conclusion that perhaps no subject would be more important and appropriate for this occasion than the one I have chosen.

“OUR RACIAL NEEDS.”

This may seem a little out of place to some of you, but I feel that no subject demands more thorough consideration at this time. Having started out just a few years ago upon our own responsibility, it is quite necessary that we give some thought to the things needful for our successful career through life.

The work of establishing an institution of learning in this place has already begun; and it is earnestly hoped that in the near future our boys and girls shall at this place receive a store of knowledge, such as will fit them for future usefulness. Do not be in too great a hurry, and consequently grow impatient because the work does not make more rapid progress.

We are apt to grow impatient sometimes when things do not go to suit us; but I have learned that things which move off easily do not, in every instance, prove the most beneficial in the end. This may be partially applied to your case and relative experience in this school project. Many of you, doubtless, thought the work could be accomplished in a short while; but it has not proven to be as easy as you thought. But we are all pleased to learn that the plans are being arranged, and altho it seems



slow, the future is brightening with encouraging prospects.

Only have patience, exercise proper care and judgment, and you shall be successful in your attempt.

It is intensely gratifying to know that after so long a time, much talk and eager expectation, the nucleus of this institution has been formed, and from what we see and hear, those in the lead mean business, and are laying a foundation which, if deeply and broadly laid, they may build well upon, erecting an institution of learning which will evoke a smile from heaven, and accomplish good therefrom that will only be fully realized in eternity.

Some one has asked, "Is this institution a necessity?" If we consider the number of our people in this State now, and the many thousands yet to come, and then think of the vast amount of illiteracy there is among them, no one with an unbiased mind will hesitate

to say that this institution of learning will fill a want long felt by a very large majority of the leading minds of this section of the State.

That the Colored M. E. Church in America, whose prime object is the amelioration of our people, socially, intellectually, morally, and religiously, should take some step looking to the establishing of an institution of learning of high grade on this side of the Mississippi river, is too well known and admitted to need any comment here.

That there are many parents in this State, and especially in this section, who are unable to send their children to other states to receive an education is well known. Hence, there can be no reasonable doubt that this school is a necessity. It has been only a few years since we began to act for ourselves, arrange our own plans, and undertake great responsibilities. We are to shape our own destiny, fight our own battles of life, conquer the

enemy, and gain the victory for ourselves.

To do this successfully, we all need to learn to do something and to make something which the world will need at all times.

A good, liberal education is among our greatest needs. It is a power, and if we would act our part nobly in the drama of life, if we would be strong and influential, if we would make for ourselves a name that shall live on and on even after we are gone, we must possess that power.

If the Negroes of America would hold their place as a race, if they wish to have their posterity stand side by side with the great men and women of other races, they must speedily turn their attention to the education of their children.

No race in this country stands in greater need of an education than does ours. If I were asked "what constitutes the difference between the savage and the civilized man;

between man as the animal, concerned only about his physical wants, and man, the intellectual creature, concerned about his better nature," I would answer, "Education."

To educate means to lead out; it is a development of the faculties, elevation of the mind. Daniel Webster said, "Knowledge does not comprise all which is contained in the large term of Education. The feelings are to be disciplined; the passions are to be restrained; true and worthy motives are to be inspired, a profound and religious feeling is to be instilled, and pure morality inculcated under all circumstances." All this is comprised in education.

Therefore when I say we need education, I do not confine the expression simply to a knowledge of books. We need to be properly trained in those duties which have to do with home life, such as are necessary in every family. The

preparation of food, the adorning of the house, beautifying the yard, laundry work, raising poultry, the care of the sick, and many other domestic duties demand our attention. A knowledge of these things is of great importance, and essentially necessary to the comfort, peace, and happiness of the home.

A good comfortable and happy home is among the greatest blessings this world can give to man. Truly, "There is no place like home;" but many things are necessary to make that home what it should be. Literary education and money, of themselves, will not make it so.

It is a great mistake on the part of parents to allow their children to grow up without a knowledge of, and training in, those things which have so much to do with their success in life. Every boy and girl should be taught that,

"Life is real, life is earnest,"



and that some day they may be left to fight its battle alone. It has been said that, "By divine arrangement the first teacher of every child is a woman—generally the mother." But how many mothers there are who think too much of their children to have them learn anything whatever about the duties of home. They will not allow their daughters to learn to do laundry work, cook, and do other things necessary around the home. Such daughters grow up ignorant of house-work, and seldom make good wives.

The Bishop of Orleans once said, "The hope of France is in her mothers." How true of our race! We need good, determined mothers who will spare no pains to give their children that training which will not only fit them for home duties, but will lay a lasting foundation for all the active duties of life where honesty, faithfulness, and just dealings are required.



We need good, moral education. This should not be overlooked. The races or people who have no respect for true morality, must, in the course of time, grow miserable and wretched, and continue to degenerate until they become worse than brutes. God pity such ones! It is indeed gratifying to know that within these few years of our freedom our advancement in morality has been truly wonderful.

But there is much more to be done in this direction. There is much room for improvement.

Strict conformity to the true standard of morality should be taught the youth of our race early; for "To act rightly is the safety valve of our moral nature."

Occasionally we hear students and others discussing morality upon the theory found in books on moral science. But intelligence has at best only little influence in many instances, upon the conduct. "Creeds posted upon the memory

will not eradicate vicious propensities. The intellect is merely an instrument, which is moved and worked by force behind it—by emotions, by self-restraint, by self-control, by imagination, by enthusiasm, by everything that gives force and energy to character.

The most of these principles are implanted at home, and not at school. . Where the home is miserable, worthless, and unprincipled, a place rather to be avoided than entered—then the school is the only place for learning obedience and discipline.” O! let us think about it! Let us look after our homes! It is the “true soil where virtue grows.”

Our race needs good Christian education. To have inculcated within us the true principles of Christianity is of the greatest importance. This will cause us to reverence God and his laws. Will lead us to trust in him, delight in him, commit our way unto him,

and rest in him. Truly, "Religious instruction alone imparts the spirit of self-sacrifice, great virtues, and lofty thoughts. It penetrates the conscience, and makes life bearable without a murmur against the mystery of human condition."

It has been said, "Education is a work of authority and respect," and "Christianity is the greatest school of respect the world has ever seen." So, then, in all our getting let us make sure of a *good Christian education*.

"Religion is the chief concern  
Of mortals here below."

Again, we need among us men skilled in all trades and handiwork. We need and must have stenographers, reporters, copyists, wood engravers, telegraphers, photographers, workers in ivory and guttapercha, gilding and chemicals. We need moulders, designers, lithographers and workers in everything which guarantee employment to the masses. Some of

these we have; but we need to have them all abundantly. It is just as necessary for the farmer, mechanic, and manufacturer to be educated and skilled in their trades as it is for the lawyer, physician, and minister of the gospel. Negroes are just as susceptible of learning these trades, and, if given a chance, can be as successful as any other race.

We need school teachers and preachers who are fully prepared in every way to perform their duty with credit, and to the edification of their pupils and hearers. The school-room and the pulpit are great forces, the greatest moral forces we have; for here all come for instruction. With a good supply of these and a faithful performance of their duty, we may hope for much from the race.

If such needs as I have mentioned can be supplied among us, ours will be a race of power for good in this country and throughout the

world. May we, with renewed and hopeful vigor, set out with a determination to supply ourselves; for until this is done, we must continue in the back-ground and eke out a miserable existence.

Intelligence and wealth, accompanied by refinement, morality and religion, will bring to us recognition from others, and demand the highest respect from all people.

Let us possess these largely, and success is ours. To the trustees, I would say, you have begun a work here which is stupendous. Your success depends largely upon your own action. There must be a united effort. To establish an institution of learning here that shall stand throughout the ages, you need to lay a *sure* foundation upon which to build. You must build wisely. Begin right; keep right; and you will end right. A failure to do this might cause serious difficulty in the future. You have in



view the higher education of our youth. May you be successful and send out from here year after year, strong-minded young ladies and men, who, by their careful training, shall be prepared to enter the various professions with honor and credit.

Young ladies and gentlemen, you are engaged in a noble work. A work which, if pursued with persistence, will bring you to honor and cause showers of blessings to fall upon you. May I ask you to labor earnestly to have your minds so trained and such principles implanted as will fit you for any worthy avocation in life. Remember that what man has done, man can do. To be successful there must be much study and effort on your part. All great men experienced much difficulty in working their way up to the top in this world. If it is your desire to be well cultivated, virtuous men and women, worthy to enter any good and en-



lightened society, you must assuredly devote your time to your several studies. Never say fail.

“If at first, you don’t succeed,  
Try, try again.”

While these days and opportunities are given you to obtain culture, make good use of them. Do not stop for difficulties. If you have them, work through them. Meet them with courage and cheerfulness. If you meet with oppositions, overcome them. The race is standing in great need of your services. Will you try to do something to help your down-trodden race to a higher plane? Prepare yourselves to be useful men and women. Say with Longfellow,

“Lives of great men all reminds us,  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And departing, leave behinds us,  
Foot-prints on the sands of time.”

# LINES DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF BISHOP W. H. MILES.

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(First Bishop of the C. M. E. Church in America.  
Born Dec. 25, 1827—Died Nov. 14, 1892.)

And Bishop W. H. Miles is dead ;—  
Not dead, but sleeps as Jesus said,  
In peaceful rest beyond the vale—  
This vale where human hearts all fail.  
His labors on the earth are done,  
Up to his great reward he's gone,  
With angels now he is at rest,  
To live with spirits just and blest.

Thirty and five long years he preached ;  
Both old and young he tried to teach,  
Of his success we all may know,  
The good he did his works will show,  
To his great calling ever true,  
His honest heart and willing too,  
His spirit and his mind, both brave,  
All bent on dying souls to save.

The mighty word of God he taught ;  
Men of the world to Christ he brought ;  
And now of him we all may say,  
He led them in the good old way.

(196)

Himself a Christian, tried and true,  
'Twas his delight to labor too,  
To point all men to God's dear Son,  
And urge them all to glory run.

A leader of a mighty host,  
Forever standing at his post ;  
One who was ever kind and true, [do,  
Who sought the good his hands might  
Who labored here for God's dear Son,  
His work will never be unknown ;  
But fol'wing him, as John did write,  
His works will ever be in sight.

Now broken in the golden bowl ;  
Departed is his precious soul ;  
To that blest land of pure delight,  
Where we are told, "there is no night,"  
How sad to think that we no more  
Shall meet him on this earthly shore !  
His spirit far from us has gone,  
Ere long we too shall follow on.

The Church has lost a friend indeed,  
A man who always sought its need ;  
Who always tried to keep its laws,  
And ever labored for its cause.  
That we shall miss him there's no doubt  
His deeds are known the Church  
throughout,  
His faithfulness we all attest ;  
We know he tried to do his best.

Yes, he has gone to reign above,  
Where all is joy and peace and love ;  
And we to all the Church may tell,  
How Jesus hath done all things well.

His loving wife and children dear,  
No more on earth his voice will hear ;  
But then the Scripture doth us tell  
That with the righteous all is well.

Altho his voice no more they'll hear,  
One thing to us doth seem quite clear,  
That in that bright and happy land,  
They all may meet and strike his hand,  
We know that it was God's own will,  
To take him home—to Zion's hill,  
Then let us all fresh courage take,  
Do all we can for Jesus' sake.

Do all we can in Jesus' name,  
Think not of ease or worldly fame,  
Our time on earth may not be long,  
Soon we shall go to meet the throng.  
A happy meeting that will be,  
When we from sorrow shall be free,  
When we shall lay our burdens down,  
And then go up to wear a crown.

Now, in the realms of endless day,  
Methinks I hear our dear Miles say  
To all his comrades on the field,  
“Come on! to satan never yield.  
Be of good cheer, 'twill not be long  
Before you'll join this happy throng.  
Then tread the powers of darkness down,  
Come up! and wear the starry crown.”

## A FRIEND INDEED.

---

They tell me that a friend in need  
Is apt to be a friend indeed,  
No matter what the plaint may be,  
He is ever with you, frank and free.

I have seen men who claimed to be  
Most friendly, kind and true to me ;  
But when they heard that I was down,  
Somehow they failed to "come around."

Such friends 'twill never do to trust,  
Their friendship is like unto dust ;  
They'll never do to lean upon,  
For when you need them, they're gone.

And, O, how false is friendship now !  
To trust a man, you don't know how ;  
Like some of old they lie in wait,  
And hope to laugh at your sad fate.

But he who is a friend indeed  
Will not forsake you when in need ;  
He will not leave you in distress ;  
But for your cause will do his best.

Now, such a friend I like to see,  
It matters not who he may be ;  
For since he is an honest man,  
I'll gladly grasp him by the hand.

200      PRACTICAL THOUGHTS.

His company I like to keep  
Of his good deeds I love to speak,  
No friend need fear him day nor night ;  
For he will always do the right.









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